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**Thought and Being in the Opening Transitions of  
Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit***

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PhD in Philosophy

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## **Abstract**

My thesis attempts to provide a new account of the opening transitions of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (i.e. the transitions of sections A.-C.(AA.)) as the basis for a critical assessment of that work.

My account is motivated by two interpretative difficulties that often prove divisive for commentators. First, the difficulty of how we are to understand the transition from section 'A. Consciousness' to section 'B. Self-Consciousness'; and second, the difficulty of precisely what Hegel means by identifying Kantian Idealism as the "same kind of self-contradictory ambiguity as Scepticism" (PS 238, p.144), albeit a positive rather than a negative expression of this ambiguity, in section C.(AA.). I argue that these two difficulties are related, insofar as Hegel's reaction to Scepticism informs his critique of Kant, which in turn affects the conception that Hegel has of his own project in the *Phenomenology* and of the manner in which it is to be structured.

I contend that, for Hegel, a key problem to be addressed is the failure of previous philosophical positions to investigate the general form of judgement (the subject/predicate relation) in a sufficiently critical manner. This failure, for Hegel, leads to a distorted view, to the effect that thought and being are irreparably separated, which he takes to be at the heart of Kantian theoretical philosophy, and which precludes the possibility of giving true philosophical proofs. I argue that the correction of such a distorted view is a main aim of the *Phenomenology* and that, in the transitions from A. to C.(AA.), Hegel provides an in principle proof of the unity of thought and being.

*Per Clara –*

*“La dubbio dimane non t’impaura.  
Leggiadra ti distendi  
sullo scoglio lucente di sale  
e al sole bruci le membra ...  
L’acqua è la forza che ti temprà,  
nell’acqua ti ritrovi e ti rinnovi:  
noi ti pensiamo come un’alga, un ciottolo,  
come un’equorea creatura che la salsedine non intacca  
ma torna al lito più pura ...*

*Ti guardiamo noi, della razza  
di chi rimane a terra. ”*

*(E. Montale)*

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## **Preface**

As the title suggests, the primary aim of this dissertation is to present an interpretation of the relation of thought and being in the opening transitions (those from A. Consciousness to C.(AA) Reason) of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. According to this interpretation, the opening transitions demonstrate to the reader the unity or identity of thought and being, that is, the transitions demonstrate that “what is *thought*, *is*, and that what *is*, only *is* in so far as it is thought” (PM §465, p.224). In other words, Hegel there shows that thought is capable of comprehending the fundamental ontological structure of being as being is itself intrinsically rational or conceptual in nature.

This interpretation is arrived at by considering the similarities between two ways for unifying thought and being suggested by Hegel in his *Encyclopædia Logic* discussion of Kant's objections to the proofs of God's existence, and the passage from A. Consciousness to C.(AA.) Reason in the *Phenomenology*. Broadly, I argue that the passage from section A. to section B. in the *Phenomenology* exemplifies one way, and the passage from section B. to section C.(AA.) the other. We find that in both the *Encyclopædia Logic* and the *Phenomenology* the view that thought and being are dichotomous rests on a number of unwarranted assumptions which must be relinquished if a philosophically defensible picture of thought and being is to emerge.

Specifically, what is objected to the unity of thought and being is that the immediately given empirical determinations which being is ordinarily taken to consist in seem, on their own account, essentially diverse from the universals we employ in thinking or making judgements about them. Such a diversity seems to preclude deriving the universal determinations from the immediate ones as well as the converse: deriving the immediate determinations from the universals, i.e. it seems to preclude both directions in which one might attempt to show the unity of thought and being. Hegel argues that this kind of objection rests on a number of unwarranted assumptions, the primary being that the general form of judgement, in which some determination (as predicate) is compared to some fixed, already isolated determination (as subject), is the form of truth. Alternatively put, the assumption is that truth, as a determinate content, is fixed and capable of being isolated such that it can act as a standard against which to compare other determinations. A clear and



philosophically defensible picture of thought and being, which for Hegel involves their unity, can only be given via a recognition and suspension of such assumptions.

My claim is that the opening sections of the *Phenomenology* show this to the reader, that is, they show that the result of the suspension of all such assumptions is that thought and being constitute a unity. The course through the opening sections of the *Phenomenology* does not alone establish this unity as it does not treat all the relevant assumptions, but it does allow the reader to discern that the eventual result is such a unity. In this sense the demonstration or the proof of unity is here only in principle.

The implication for a reading of Hegel's philosophy is that this philosophy results from the suspension of what Hegel sees to be unwarranted assumptions concerning the relation of thought to being that underlie other philosophical positions. If all such assumptions are suspended, then we are, for Hegel, lead to the realization that thought and being constitute a unity, that being is intrinsically conceptual in its structure. Such a reading is then 'metaphysical', while it views Hegel's metaphysics to be grounded in an imperative to demonstrate all unwarranted principles and fundamental assumptions, an imperative which is, to a lesser degree, present in the Critical philosophy of Hegel's immediate predecessors: Kant and Fichte.

In order to highlight the role of this imperative in Hegel's thought, I have provided a broadly historical account of Hegel's analysis of scepticism and its relation to Critical philosophy as he sees it. While Critical philosophy adopts elements of scepticism into its methodology, for Hegel, it ultimately fails to discern the potency of 'true' or 'authentic' scepticism and, as a result, proves dogmatic in some of its procedures. Hegel accordingly identifies Critical philosophy as both a positive expression and an imperfect form of scepticism, and understanding the details of what is meant by characterizing Critical philosophy in this way allows one to grasp the force of the imperative and its role in Hegel's methodology.

Throughout the dissertation I have attempted to emphasize the importance of the notion that thought and being form a unity in Hegel's philosophy, and the role this notion plays in the early sections of the *Phenomenology* as well as in Hegel's critique of pre-Critical metaphysics, empiricism and Critical philosophy. As a consequence, I have focused heavily on Hegel's texts and do not make much of moments where Hegel's argument may appear overly ambitious or implausible. Thus, I do not attempt to make of Hegel something more palatable to contemporary sensibilities, to save

what is deemed worthwhile from an otherwise fundamentally defunct project. Indeed, given Hegel's imperative to demonstrate all assumptions and unwarranted principles, to do so prior to understanding the nature of this imperative would be a failure to take Hegel's thought seriously. What follows is, therefore, primarily an attempt to understand Hegel rather to improve upon or reject him.

## **List of Abbreviations**

The following abbreviations are used for references to works by Hegel:

**PS** – *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

**EL** = *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part 1 of the 'Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences' (with the Zusätze)*, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 1991.

**LHP** = *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E.S. Haldane & F. H. Simpson, London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

**DF** = *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. W. Cerf & H.S. Harris, Albany: SUNY Press, 1977.

**RSP** – *The Relation of Scepticism to Philosophy*, trans. H. S. Harris, in *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, trans. & ed. H. S. Harris & G. di Giovanni, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Inc, 2000, pp. 313-62.

**SL** = *Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969.

**LPR** – *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion (Volume Three: the Lectures of 1827)*, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson & J. M. Stewart with the assistance of H. S. Harris, ed. P. C. Hodgson, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984.

**LPEG** = *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God together with a Work on the Proofs of the Existence of God*, trans. E. B. Spiers & J. Burdon Sanderson, ed. E. B. Spiers, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd. 1895.

**PM** – *Philosophy of Mind: Part Three of the 'Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences' (1830) (with the Zusätze)*, trans. W. Wallace & A. V. Miller, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

**OUH** – *How the Ordinary Human Understanding Takes Philosophy (as displayed in the works of Mr. Krug)*, trans. H. S. Harris, in *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, trans. & ed. H. S. Harris

& G. di Giovanni, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Inc, 2000,  
pp. 292-310.

The abbreviation **CPR** followed by the customary A (first edition)/B (second edition) references are used for I. Kant *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., with corrections. London: Macmillan, 1933.

## **Introduction**

There is nothing contentious about the claim that much of Hegel's philosophy is strongly informed by his reaction to the works of his philosophical contemporaries and immediate predecessors such as Schelling, Fichte, Reinhold, Schulze and perhaps most significantly Kant. Indeed, it is possible to give a general account of a broad but standard framework of some of the developments in the philosophical thought of the period that lead up to Hegel's own philosophy<sup>1</sup>. However, contention does arise between commentators on the period when it comes to addressing questions of the following kind: 'precisely which details are most important to the formulation of Hegel's thought?', 'just what is the nature and degree of influence that they can be said to have exerted on that process of formulation?', and such questions will seldom receive the same answer from different commentators. Many of the recent trends in the interpretation of Hegel's works can be delineated by the standpoints they adopt regarding matters of Hegel's relation to figures such as Kant *et al*<sup>2</sup>, and more generally debate continues surrounding the relation of these figures to each other and the impact this has on the philosophical orientation of German Idealism as a whole<sup>3</sup>.

The focus of my interest in this dissertation is not with the wider issue of the general orientation of German Idealism, though some of what I say may well impact on this wider issue, but instead with the issue of Hegel's reaction to Kant's theoretical philosophy and the impact it has on the structure of his philosophical project as presented in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. This interest grows out of a couple of interpretive difficulties encountered in the opening sections of the *Phenomenology*, difficulties that often prove divisive for commentators.

The first difficulty is that of the transition from section 'A. Consciousness' to section 'B. Self-Consciousness'. Perhaps the most straightforward reading of this

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see F. Beiser (ed.) 1993, pp.1-20. Basically put, such an account typically traces the development of attempts to respond to dualisms found in Kant's work by early critics such as Maimon, outlining Fichte's attempt to solve the dualisms through a principle of subject-object identity and the subsequent reactions of Schelling and Hegel to Fichte's system.

<sup>2</sup> For a useful summary of recent trends see K. Ameriks 1992. Also see M. N. Forster 1989 & 1998, R. B. Pippin 1989, K. Westphal 1989 & 2003, R. Stern 1990 & 2002, J. Stewart 2000. Even interpreters whose focus is more specifically oriented toward the impact of the problems of Ancient Scepticism on Hegel's work, such as Forster and Westphal above, can be grouped under this rubric. Certainly Hegel's desire to meet such problems stems in a large degree from his reading of influential sceptical works of the period like G. E. Schulze's *Aenesidemus*, along with his perception that such works failed to encapsulate the genuine sceptical threat.

<sup>3</sup> For instance see S. Gardner & P. Franks 2002.

transition is to see it as a movement from the theoretical to the practical. Section A. appears to involve a movement through increasingly complex theoretical understandings of objects in which a wedge is driven between the subject, on the one hand, and its object on the other, until the object as the subject experiences it is usurped by a theoretical or scientific approximation of it. The wedge driven between subject and object here comes to be viewed by the subject as permanent and fixed, and in light of this situation the subject reacts by leaving the theoretical stance behind and moving over to a more direct mode of engagement with its object. Section B. is then seen as involving a movement through a certain conception of practical ideas expressed in terms of stages of incomplete recognition. This seems to fit the text well enough, but work has to be done to show how the transition from the final stage of A. to the first of B. is a necessary one, as well as how both sections are to cohere in their results.

Charles Taylor suggests that a certain structural sense is to be made of the transition if we accept it as involving two diverse kinds of dialectic<sup>4</sup>. The first, which we witness in A., he calls 'ontological' or 'strict' dialectics "whose starting point is or can reasonably claim to be undeniable"<sup>5</sup>. So in the *Phenomenology*

"(W)e start from the basis that there is knowledge, and that knowledge is an achievement. What we do not know, if we can put it this way, is what is involved in meeting the standard. Or rather, all we know about this is certain very sketchy critical properties. Thus we start with the simple but intuitively persuasive idea that knowledge is receiving data, and that the standard to be met is that of maximum openness and receptivity. This is the idea behind sensible certainty. When this involves us in contradiction, we alter our conception of what knowledge is. This starts a second phase of the dialectic; and so on. The key to dialectic movement here is that since we know that the standard is met, we can conclude that any conception of it which shows itself unrealisable must be wrong."<sup>6</sup>

This strict dialectic, given the starting point, convinces by argument and stands in distinction to the second type: 'historical' or 'interpretive' dialectic, which

<sup>4</sup> C. Taylor 1975, Ch. VIII, pp. 214-21 & Ch IV, pp130-5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p.218.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p.216.

“starts from the thesis that a certain purpose is sought after, even though it is *not* yet realized. Here the clash between purpose and effective reality leads not to *our* redefining the purpose, but to the breaking up of the reality concerned and its replacement by a more adequate one (although of course this requires a redefinition of purpose on the part of the *effective agents* in history) ... Certain historical forms of life are shown to be prey to inner contradiction because they are defeating the purpose for which they exist”<sup>7</sup>

The difficulty here is that the starting point, the certain purpose, is imputed and this imputation seems far from undeniable. For Taylor, Hegel’s most successful historical dialectics seem successful because they ‘fit well’ as an interpretation of a historical period, but the imputation of the purpose that directs them cannot be justified or viewed as self-authenticating “(P)rior to the total unfolding of history”<sup>8</sup>. The contrasting point of this second form of dialectic then, is that it convinces only by the plausibility of interpretation, and it is just this second form of dialectic, Taylor claims, that we find in B. and throughout the remaining sections of the *Phenomenology*.

Now, Taylor thinks that if the strict dialectic of A. can establish “that there is no independent finite being, but that all is held together in the Idea, the formula of rational necessity which creates its own external manifestation”<sup>9</sup>, then the certain purposes imputed in the historical dialectics, e.g. “the imputation of the drive for recognition”<sup>10</sup> in the master-slave dialectic, or the “purpose of realising a consciousness and way of life which is universal”<sup>11</sup> in his account of the breakdown of the Greek city state, will be legitimately available as starting points because they have been “established previously by a strict dialectic”<sup>12</sup>. That is, if Hegel can establish his “central contention that the world of things only exists as an emanation of *Geist*, and therefore that spirit knows itself in knowing it”<sup>13</sup> first, by strict dialectic, then the historical types of dialectic will be legitimated. Taylor doubts whether this is

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.218.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.219.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p.217.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p.218.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p.219.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p.221.

possible and thinks that the strict dialectic of the *Phenomenology* is far too meagre to support the historical one that rests on top of it<sup>14</sup>.

Taylor's account of the transition from A. to B. as essentially a failed attempt to ground a weakly founded dialectic on a more secure one, stands in stark contrast to that of Robert Pippin's<sup>15</sup> description of the transition in terms of explicitly Kantian notions. For Pippin the 'Force and the Understanding' chapter of A.

"presents us with a Kantian statement of the basic epistemological problem and a Kantian suggestion about its resolution ... The required link between the nonsensible and the sensible, or, put another way, between pure concepts and the sensory manifold, is supplied by the understanding itself. And this is the problem and solution that defined Kant's critical period and that generally repeats his solution. The essence of appearances, the origin of the unity and order of appearances, is not some beyond, or some law like generalization, but the self-conscious activity of the understanding itself"<sup>16</sup>.

The transition from A. to B. is then given in the realisation that the object is a construction of the subject, and so moving from a consideration of mere consciousness in which knowledge is taken to be essentially passive and receptive, to a consideration of self-consciousness, in which the subject's responsibility for or active role in constituting its object is realised, seems natural enough.

But such a Kantian reading remains a long way from appeasing everyone<sup>17</sup>. Taken simply in its function as a reading of the transition, as R. Stern has pointed out<sup>18</sup>, it is not clear that it can account for the necessity of the transition in terms of the consciousness observed. 'We' as observers of that consciousness are the group that come to realise that 'the essence of appearances' is 'the self-conscious activity of the understanding', but it is far from clear in the text that the consciousness observed and undergoing the transition is supposed to arrive at this realisation at this point<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Taylor suggests that the mature Hegel probably also thought that a much larger, strict dialectic was required, and points to the fact that the much longer and more difficult *Logic* formed the keystone of the mature system, as evidence.

<sup>15</sup> R. B. Pippin 1989, Ch's 6 & 7, pp. 116-71.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 138-9.

<sup>17</sup> For example, see K. Ameriks 1991, T. Pinkard 1990a, R. Stern 'Hegel's Idealism' (forthcoming in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Cambridge Companion to Hegel*), S. Houlgate 2006 pp.137-43. The main points of dissatisfaction with this account seem to be a perceived lack of accuracy to Hegel's texts and its characterisation of Hegel's position as a species of anti-realism.

<sup>18</sup> R. Stern 2002, p.67.

<sup>19</sup> "The *necessary advance* from the previous shapes of consciousness for which their truth was a Thing, an 'other' than themselves, expresses just this, that not only is consciousness of a thing possible



Both Taylor's reading and that of Pippin are merely two examples of a number of ways of approaching the Consciousness/Self-Consciousness transition<sup>20</sup>. They are, however, indicative of what has come to be characterised in the recent literature as the two predominant trends in interpreting Hegel's thought as a whole, viz. metaphysical and non-metaphysical approaches<sup>21</sup>. The metaphysical approach basically reads Hegel as being engaged in reviving a kind of pre-Kantian, Spinozistic metaphysics, as an account of what truly exists, while the non-metaphysical approach reads Hegel as sharing a much higher degree of continuity with Kant and as offering "a non-metaphysical philosophy devoid of existence claims and innocent of a reductionism opting for certain existences to the detriment of others"<sup>22</sup>. A large part of the motivation for the latter reading comes from a desire to defend Hegel against the former, which arguably leaves Hegel with an extravagant, overblown metaphysics repugnant to modern sensibilities, as well as leaving incomprehensible the issue of how Hegel could have taken himself to be a post-Kantian philosopher<sup>23</sup>.

My own approach to the A.-B. transition is to start afresh and ask whether clear sense can't be made of it simply by closely following the text of the *Phenomenology* and the development of Hegel's argument there – taking it at face value, so to speak. The whole question of the transition turns on there not being an obvious and sufficient continuity between A. and B. in the text; suggestions as to how one ought to read the transition, e.g. as a shift in method or as a restatement of the principle of apperception, are made on this basis. In looking to the text for an obvious and immanent continuity between the sections, I will not, then, be engaging in detailed discussion with the various interpretations. Rather, I'll be seeking to explain the transition as obvious and warranted given the previous transitions already passed through by the reader.

There are of course those who, take the view that the picture of Hegel's system as being closely related to that of Kant and as being an extension of it, is evidence of Hegel's argumentative reliance on the preceding Kantian and post-

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only for a self-consciousness, but that self-consciousness alone is the truth of these shapes. But it is only *for us* that this truth exists, not yet for consciousness" (PS 164, p.102). Much more will be said of this transition in chapter one below.

<sup>20</sup>For example, see Kojève 1969, Gadamer 1976, Solomon 1983, Pinkard 1994, Kelly 1998, Rockmore 1997, McDowell 2003.

<sup>21</sup>An interesting discussion of the cogency of framing debate about interpreting Hegel in these terms, and the contributions of both sides to Hegel studies can be found in Kreines 2006.

<sup>22</sup>Hartmann 1972, p.110. Hartmann 1972 in the *locus classicus* for the non-metaphysical approach, which has now developed in a variety of directions. For example, see Pippin 1989, Brandom 1999.

<sup>23</sup>For example, see Pippin 1989, pp. 3-15.

Kantian positions, and of the relative paucity of Hegel's own argumentation if a presupposed acceptance of the general trend of such positions is not present in the reader. I am thinking here of E. Craig's account<sup>24</sup>, which has the aim of

“showing that Hegel's thought ... is buoyed up by the attraction of the romantic thesis of oneness with the ultimate reality -- without it, his argumentative cupboard is quickly seen to be bare. What he does, far from being a neutral refutation of the sceptic, or of subjectivist theories of knowledge, is more like the assumption of some such principle and the detailed elucidation of its consequences for epistemology. In other words, it is not, as Hegel himself would have us believe, a proof: it is an articulation of one aspect of the dominant philosophy of his time”<sup>25</sup>.

While my own proclivities do not tend toward such a view, Craig's reading (along with Pippin's) is correct to highlight the close link between Hegel's concern with scepticism and his reading of the Critical philosophy inaugurated by Kant<sup>26</sup>.

It does seem to be the case that, for Hegel, there is a close tie between scepticism and Critical philosophy – both Westphal and Forster take Hegel's reaction and response to Ancient scepticism to inform his general epistemological strategy and its move beyond Critical philosophy. The issue of the relation between Hegel's thought regarding scepticism and his reaction to the Critical philosophy raises the second interpretative difficulty that interests me in the opening sections of the *Phenomenology*: that of determining just what Hegel means by identifying Kantian Idealism (in section ‘C.(AA.) Reason’) as “the same kind of self-contradictory ambiguity as Scepticism” (PS 238, p.144) (albeit in the mode of a positive expression of this ‘ambiguity’) and its implications for his project.

By clarifying the connection between Hegel's reading of Ancient Scepticism and his reaction to Critical philosophy, it is possible to show how insights gained in his reading of scepticism inform, not only his reaction to Critical philosophy, but also the opening transitions between A. and C.(AA.) in the *Phenomenology*<sup>27</sup>, and it is one

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<sup>24</sup> E. Craig 1987.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. pp. 186-7.

<sup>26</sup> For instance: “Hegel usually places his discussions of scepticism in the context of the ‘Critical Philosophy’, that is to say of Kant and his doctrine that theoretical knowledge could only be of appearances, or ‘empirical reality’, not of things in themselves, things as they are independently of our ways of experiencing or thinking about them”. Ibid. p.187.

<sup>27</sup> Henceforth, “opening transitions” and “opening sections” will be used to designate those transitions from A. to C.(AA.) and sections A. to C.(AA.) respectively.

of my overall aims to highlight a particular way in which Hegel's reading of scepticism in relation to his thought concerning Critical philosophy, does inform these opening transitions. The details of this will only become clear as we continue, but an indication of some of the features of the general account I'll be arguing for can be given here by way of a comparison to Forster's notion of Hegel's theory of an historical *Ur-teilung*<sup>28</sup>.

Forster argues that Hegel explains the historical transition from pagan Greek to Judeo-Christian culture in the *Phenomenology*, in terms of the emergence of a sceptical culture (characterised by general equipollence difficulties of how to assess which claim as to matters of fact is correct when the competing claims/arguments on both sides appear equally strong, and a concept-instantiation problem of how to decide whether our concepts correspond to anything in the world) and a structural framework of *Ur-teilung* (which can be rendered as 'judgement' but also 'arche-separation' or 'original division'). This structural framework is taken from Hölderlin who held a metaphysical theory in which a primordial unity, Being (*Sein*), is first divided into subject and object for human consciousness by a process labelled *Ur-teilung*.

"Judgement (*Urteil*) is in the highest and strictest sense the original separation of the object and subject which are most immediately united in intellectual intuition, that separation through which alone the object and subject become possible, the arche-separation (*Ur-teilung*) ... Being (*Sein*) expresses the connection between subject and object. Where subject and object are united altogether and not only in part, that is, united in such a manner that no separation can be performed without violating the essence of what is to be separated, there and nowhere else can be spoken of Being *proper*, as is the case with intellectual intuition"<sup>29</sup>.

Forster claims that Hegel adopts this idea of an original division of a primordial state of unity and (via the influence of Schelling) applies it to events within human history. He notes, that "Hegel does not actually use the word *Ur-teilung* to

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<sup>28</sup> M. Forster 1989, Part II, pp.47-94.

<sup>29</sup> F. Hölderlin 1988. Part of Hölderlin's aim in this text was to criticize Fichte's notion of a self-positing, self-conscious subject as constituting a first principle or starting point for philosophy. Expressed as 'I am I', Fichte's principle for Holderlin cannot be one of unity, but must rather be one of separation (such a self-consciousness is constituted by the separation of itself from itself – the subject becomes aware of itself as object), and is itself predicated on an apprehension of a more fundamental unity (Being). See Y. Yovel 2005, pp.47-9, T. Pinkard 2000a, pp.133-6 and 2000b, pp.162-3.

refer to a historical division of an original unity, reserving the term for his ahistorical logic instead”<sup>30</sup> but that Hegel does envisage such a division occurring in the form of “a division of the objects of human consciousness into ... a social and natural world having a harsh, objective character and ... a remote, inscrutable, and despotic divinity”<sup>31</sup>. Forster thinks that this can be seen most clearly in the ‘Spirit’ chapter of the *Phenomenology*, where an internal division of Spirit into Culture (*Bildung*) on the one hand and Faith (*Glaube*) on the other is described. But he readily acknowledges (following Lukács) that the *Phenomenology* involves three treatments of the whole course of history, each under a different aspect.

“First, there is a treatment of the whole of history under the aspect of the individual consciousness in the chapters ‘Consciousness’, ‘Self-Consciousness’, and ‘Reason’. Then there is a second treatment ... under the aspect of the developing social order in the ‘Spirit’ chapter. Finally, there is a third treatment ... under the aspect of the developing artistic, religious, and philosophical views of men which express the Absolute in the chapters ‘Religion’ and ‘Absolute Knowing’. Thus the historical event described in the ‘Spirit’ chapter as the division of the harmonious unity of Ethical Life into the realms of Faith and Culture is treated at other points in the *Phenomenology* as well”<sup>32</sup>.

This would suggest that the course of an historical *Ur-teilung* could also be traced through other sections of the *Phenomenology*, besides the chapter on ‘Spirit’, and in what follows I outline the role of such a separation or division in helping to account for the difficult transition from A. to B..

Insofar as the move from A. to B. describes the kind of division similar to that of the Hölderlinian *Ur-teilung*, it is a move from Being, in which there is no real separation or antithetical relation between subject and object, to a position where there seems to be such a radical separation between these elements that the subject is left with access only to itself – its own thought. The general course of the demonstration then traces a path from this thought back to Being – the separation or division coming to be seen as an internal division of the Absolute and not a fundamental division of two separate and opposed elements. Basically put, my own contention is that what we witness in the transition from A. to B. is part of a

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<sup>30</sup> Op. Cit. p.50.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p.51.

demonstration or proof of sorts, of the Hegelian view that there can be conceptual and demonstrative knowledge of the Absolute.

Now, there are further elements in Forster's account that will allow me outline this contention more clearly. In Forster's account, Hegel explains such a division in terms of the emergence of what Forster calls a 'sceptical culture', in which difficulties of equipollence and concept-instantiation are raised, and the "intellectual *preconditions* of raising these difficulties are established"<sup>33</sup>. Accordingly, Forster provides an account of Hegel's identification of various intellectual causes for the disruption of the harmonious, unified Greek culture, which establish the intellectual preconditions for raising the sceptical difficulties<sup>34</sup>. His account identifies two themes concerning both the intellectual preconditions of the sceptical difficulties and the difficulties themselves: the first, taken from the 'Stoicism' and 'Scepticism' passages of B., is that of an awareness of a sharp distinction between thought and reality (being), and the second, to be found in the later 'Spirit' and 'Religion' chapters, is a contextually sensitive recasting of the first which yields awareness of an equipollence problem. The preconditions are simply those necessary for the form of consciousness observed to be able to raise the sceptical difficulties in one form or another, to become explicitly aware of the division that is involved in this, in one way or another.

What I think about this is that, while I agree with Forster that the precondition focussed on in the Stoicism/Scepticism sections of B. is that of a sharp division between thought and being, I believe that part of what Hegel is attempting to demonstrate in A. through B. is that the division is inherent in consciousness's mode of cognition. The distorted view that this division is insurmountable has its source in the insufficently critical acceptance of this mode as true. Holding fast to this mode as true, rather than following its own necessary developmental path through or beyond itself to the truth of matters, perpetuates the distorted view that thought and being are irreparably sundered – that a demonstration or proof of their unity cannot be given.

Further clarification of my contention will come in the course of what follows, but I would like to note here that while scepticism for Hegel represents the negative philosophical view *par excellence*, it also involves and brings forth an implicit awareness of the falsity of the distorted view. Scepticism is seen, in some sense, to be based on principles that involve such distortion and it reduces these principles, along

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p.48.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Ch 4., pp.55-76.

with itself, to nullity. In this regard scepticism for Hegel is “just as little directed *against* philosophy as *for* it” (RSP p.30/p.330). Proper philosophical consideration of scepticism then should aid one in seeing beyond the putative distortion of consciousness’s mode of cognition. Such consideration is lacking, according to Hegel, in Critical philosophy and in many other recognisable philosophies. Accordingly, one might expect that any putative demonstration of Hegel’s will minimally need to provide an account of the development of the distortion and a means, via scepticism, to move beyond it.

Obviously such a general indication of my account and some of its facets can do little more than give a rough overall impression of the scope of my aims in what follows, and by way of clarification it should be said that I only hope to garner enough evidence to suggest that my general interpretation of the opening sections of the *Phenomenology* (A. through to C.(AA.)) is at least, in principle, philosophically viable. I cannot hope to establish the success or failure of Hegel’s project (as I see it) in these sections – such an aim would require a much larger volume – though naturally, observations will be made regarding the likelihood of success or failure. I take myself to be primarily involved in a task of laying an interpretation of these opening sections which provides a solid basis for critical assessment.

The strategy I have adopted to achieve this is one of focussing on the various sections of a number of Hegel’s works and of drawing connections between them in order to build up a picture of his intent in the transition from A. through B., and a model of its workings. The most obvious merit of such an approach is its reliance on textual evidence, minimising the temptation to read something into the transition from outside of Hegel’s work. Such an approach also stresses a certain coherence in Hegel’s thought over time – a common thread in the conception of his project over a range of works.

An inevitable concern that arises with the employment of such a strategy is that Hegel’s dense prose will be left inaccessible to the reader in the course of the account. That is to say, stylistically Hegel’s work presents problems for the modern reader; it is often difficult and dense with many themes or issues being given simultaneous treatment, and when compared to modern works it can often appear unclear, imprecise and quite alien. Its difficulty and density however, are also part of its beauty and one must be careful to avoid oversimplification for clarity’s sake in the exposition of it.

In light of this I attempt, in chapter one, to present *prima facie* evidence for my contention that in the transitions of A. and B. of the *Phenomenology* we witness a separation of thought from being which is shown to be inherent in consciousness's mode of cognition, such that, far from being irreparable, this separation rests on an insufficiently critical acceptance of this mode of cognition as true or accurate, and is actually just a moment or stage in the unity of thought and being. I allow passages of Hegel's own texts to build up a picture of the general project and schematic outline of the transitions in A. and B., drawing out a general interpretive model or working hypothesis of the function of these transitions, which is to be tested. In chapter two, I change focus to the issue of clarifying Hegel's identification of Critical philosophy and scepticism. Understanding this identification allows us to better appreciate Hegel's motivation for his own project and the function of the opening transitions. In chapter three I return to the working hypothesis, clarifying the link between this hypothesis and Hegel's concerns regarding scepticism and Critical philosophy. I derive a number expectations from comments made in other works of Hegel, that the material of the opening transitions of the *Phenomenology* ought to meet if our hypothesis regarding it is to be confirmed, and I carry out the comparison of those expectations with that material to see whether or not they are fulfilled.

## **Chapter One: Opening Transitions of the *Phenomenology***

It is in the famous ‘Preface’ to the *Phenomenology* that Hegel outlines his conception of the nature of the philosophical project that he intends to undertake. This outline is stated in terms which can be difficult to understand, terms which seem both general and abstract<sup>35</sup>. In starting here, however, I believe that they will prove sufficiently perspicuous to offer some motivation for the perhaps equally general contentions stated in the above introduction. My intention in this chapter is to make a *prima facie* case for a general interpretive model of my reading of the opening sections of the *Phenomenology* using Hegel’s texts. First, I aim to draw out a general picture of a key philosophical difficulty that I think the opening transitions of the *Phenomenology* are designed to dissolve, the difficulty providing the basis for the general model to be tested. Insofar as I am only concerned with making a *prima facie* case for the model here, I will not be concerned with all its details – these will be filled in as we progress through subsequent chapters – and so I ask, temporarily, for the reader’s indulgence in what will require cutting some fairly broad swathes through dense material without the aid and comfort of every detail. That being said, the model will be treated simply as a working hypothesis, to be established. Second, I will consider whether, and if so in what way, this hypothesis can be said to fit the opening transitions of the *Phenomenology*, initially the transition from A. to B. and subsequently that from B. to C.(AA.).

### **1. The Appearance of Dichotomy**

The difficulty that Hegel identifies concerns the current state of philosophy as he sees it, and the attempt to provide actual, true knowledge, as distinguished from knowledge which ultimately can only be said to be subjectively true (true for us) or knowledge whose truth cannot be demonstrated. Hegel sets himself the task of providing such knowledge, of bringing philosophy “to the goal where it can lay aside

<sup>35</sup> The ‘Preface’, insofar as it serves the aims of preparation to and, to a degree, summary of what will follow after it, is not, strictly speaking, a text containing genuine philosophical or systematic content. Its content instead concerns philosophy, is about philosophy, and in this capacity it involves the use of many linguistic devices or modes of expression designed to be provocative to the reader, or to serve as an aid to memory for what follows. Such modes are general and abstract in the sense that they do not display genuine systematic content and their true meaning can only be gleaned in the exposition of Hegel’s system – in the exposition of their complete, developmental context. For more on the linguistic devices and modes of expression Hegel employs see Y. Yovel 1996.



the title ‘*love of knowing*’ and be *actual* knowing” (PS 5, p.3). He simply asserts in the ‘Preface’ (in lieu of the proof his system is to provide) that truth is conceptual or notional, to be precise: “that the truth has only the Notion as the element of its existence” (PS 6, p.4), and he notes that this assertion contradicts the prevalent view of his time, which instead takes truth to be delivered in, or as, intuition (Ibid.)<sup>36</sup>. If this prevalent view is correct, then what is required in philosophy is not a discursive account of truth as essentially conceptual, but rather just the intuition of truth.

“(I)f ... the True exists in what, or better *as* what, is sometimes called intuition, sometimes immediate knowledge of the Absolute, religion or being ... then what is required in the exposition of philosophy is, from this viewpoint, rather the opposite of the form of the Notion. For the Absolute is not supposed to be comprehended, it is to be felt and intuited” (Ibid.)

Hegel takes such a view to be motivated by the stage currently reached by philosophical thought. Such thought has led to the questioning of initial certainties that consciousness presumed or accepted on faith<sup>37</sup>, and has indeed resulted in the loss, along with the consciousness of this loss, of such certainties. Far from wishing to allow philosophical thought to continue in this vein, a recovery of what has been lost is called for, and from the perspective of the prevalent view

“Philosophy is to meet this need, not by opening up the fast-locked nature of substance, and raising this to self-consciousness, not by bringing consciousness out of its chaos back to an order based on thought, nor to the simplicity of the Notion, but rather by running together what thought has put asunder, by suppressing the differentiations of the Notion and restoring the *feeling* of essential being: in short, by providing edification rather than insight. The

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<sup>36</sup> This prevalent view is, perhaps, most straightforwardly identified with the views of Jacobi and Schelling, and their respective appeals to immediate, irrational faith and an experience of intellectual intuition, to ground the absolute truth of knowledge. But of course, Hegel’s target is wider than that and may be taken to include various members of the post-Kantian romantic scene, for instance, Hölderlin, Schlegel, Novalis.

<sup>37</sup> Hegel characterizes such certainties in a general way in the ‘Preface’, speaking of “the certainty that consciousness then had, of its reconciliation with the essential being, and of that being’s universal presence both within and without” (PS 7, p.4). It is obvious here that the ‘reconciliation with’ and ‘universal presence’ of the ‘essential being’ can be construed not only in religious terms, where the essential being would be God, but also in metaphysical terms, where it would be absolute substance, and epistemological terms, where it would be true absolute knowledge. Hence references in the same paragraph to “that lost sense of solid and substantial being” and the restoration of “the feeling of *essential being*” (my emphasis).

‘beautiful’, the ‘holy’, the ‘eternal’, ‘religion’, and ‘love’ are the bait required to arouse the desire to bite; not the Notion, but ecstasy, not the cold march of necessity in the thing itself, but the ferment of enthusiasm, these are supposed to be what sustains and continually extends the wealth of substance” (PS 7, pp.4/5).

Obviously Hegel does not think that the need, the recovery of what has been lost, can be met by a renewed faith in, or reliance on, intuition. It is just such faith that has been put into question by thought in the first place, indeed, one may wonder whether it isn’t just this faith that has led to the sense of loss to begin with.

The important feature here, in this prevalent view, is just what this motivating sense of loss consists in, or what it derives from. The sense of loss certainly seems to develop in the progress or use of thought, and insofar as the progress of thought is to be identified by Hegel with the emergence of culture, this progress is viewed generally to be a movement away from “the immediacy of substantial life toward general, i.e. universal, principles and conceptions” (PS 4, p.3). That is, the use of thought appears to involve the emergence of the universal from the immediate, the conceptual or notional from the intuitive or merely sensuous, the emergence of increasingly detailed or determinate comprehension from mere apprehension.

For Hegel, with the development of general principles and conceptions comes the introduction of fixed limits and distinctions. The emergence of thought from immediacy involves the conceptualization and categorization of things, which is achieved through the division of a whole into parts, as with a class into mutually exclusive, jointly exhaustive subclasses (or a genus into species), on the basis of *differentiae* – distinguishing marks or properties. Such *differentiae* delimit the members of a class from one another and are taken to belong to those members. This process is then, one of the introduction of distinction and opposition, and, more broadly speaking, the development of various dichotomies<sup>38</sup>, according to Hegel. It is in the development of such dichotomy that the loss mentioned above occurs.

Dichotomy, for Hegel, “is the source of *the need of philosophy*; and as the culture of the era, it is the unfree and given aspect of the whole configuration” (DF, p.89). The development of various dichotomies in cultures always involves “the

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<sup>38</sup> “The cultures of various times have established opposites ... which were supposed to be products of Reason and absolutes, in various ways, and the intellect has laboured over them as such ... With the progress of culture they have passed over into such forms as the antithesis of Reason and sensibility, intelligence and nature and, with respect to the universal concept, of absolute subjectivity and absolute objectivity” (DF p. 90).

appearance of the Absolute” becoming “isolated from the Absolute and fixated into independence.” (Ibid.). This development of dichotomy, this isolating and fixating, is taken to arise from the conceptualizing activity of thought. Now, this conceptualizing activity is identified with the Understanding or intellect (*Verstand*), and so it is this faculty and its capacity to distinguish by fixing limits that gives rise to the source of the need of philosophy. As Hegel puts it:

“The intellect [*Verstand*], as the capacity to set limits, erects a building and places it between man and the Absolute, linking everything that man thinks worthy and holy to this building. The entire totality of limitations is to be found in it, but not the Absolute itself. The Absolute is lost in the parts, where it drives the intellect in its ceaseless development of manifoldness. But in its striving to enlarge itself into the Absolute, the intellect only reproduces itself *ad infinitum* and so mocks itself. Reason [*Vernunft*] reaches the Absolute only in stepping outside of this manifold of parts” (DF pp. 89/90).

A clear understanding of this process and the sense in which the Understanding (*Verstand*) mocks itself will only come with further explication and a consideration of the movements within the *Phenomenology*. But, so far, what should be plain enough is that the limiting ability of the Understanding (*Verstand*) – which is to be distinguished from Reason (*Vernunft*) – is the source of the apparent loss which motivates the prevalent view’s favouring of intuition. Presumably, the limiting activity of the Understanding is seen to give rise to a dichotomy that appears insurmountable, such that it precipitates the loss of certainty that motivates the prevalent view. Given the nature of the loss glossed by Hegel in the ‘Preface’ and the characterisation in the quote above, such a dichotomy would be one between ‘essential being’ or the ‘Absolute’ and thought, insofar as thought is identified with the limiting activity of the Understanding. Intuition is then seen as one way of ‘stepping outside of this manifold of parts’, of moving beyond the fixed limits of the Understanding and the dichotomy that they give rise to. Hence the prevalent view that what was required in philosophy was the suppression of the ‘differentiations of the Notion’, via some kind of intuitive access to the truth.

Given the appearance of such a dichotomy, the awareness of it reached by the prevalent view of Hegel’s time and Hegel’s stated contradiction of the strategy of this view in his conception of truth as fundamentally notional, then Hegel will, at the very

least, have to provide an etiological explanation of the appearance of such a dichotomy, along with a discursive dissolution of it, if he is to begin to make good on his assertion that the prevalent view is mistaken in its strategy. We are told that this will involve the task of “freeing determinate thoughts from their fixity so as to give actuality to the universal” (PS 33, p.20), that is, Hegel diagnoses the problem with the limiting of the Understanding to consist in its fixity, it is the ‘fixation into independence’ from actuality of the determinations employed by the Understanding that creates difficulties<sup>39</sup>. Accordingly, this putative fixity and its opposition to ‘actuality’ should play the key role in the required etiological explanation of the appearance of the dichotomy.

Just such an etiological account is, in part, what we will witness in the transitions from A. to C.(AA.) of the *Phenomenology*, but before we go on to consider these transitions we should recall that much of what has been brought out thus far, in quite general terms, from Hegel’s comments is supposed to be identifiable, in a relatively straightforward manner, with features of Kantian and Post-Kantian philosophy. For example, the distinction of Understanding and Reason, the determining activity of the Understanding, awareness of the loss and dichotomy itself, insofar as in the Kantian philosophy things as they are in-themselves remain a beyond inaccessible to cognition, and the move to a renewed faith in intuition to recover a sense of what has been lost. Consequently, it is not surprising to find a form of a re-statement of the dichotomy that occasions the loss, and Hegel’s reaction to it, in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* in the discussion of ‘Critical Philosophy’ (Part I, B. II)<sup>40</sup>. The re-statement is given in terms of a discussion of Kant’s Dialectic and his characterisation of the notion of God as deriving from the ‘Ideal of Pure Reason’<sup>41</sup> – that from which all things derive the material of their possibility – along with his critique of the proofs of God’s existence. Hegel states that, in this account:

<sup>39</sup> While much more will be said of this process throughout what follows, it may be helpful to note here that, in respect of the generation of the dichotomy of thought and being, the idea is that the *differentiae*, which are usually taken to belong to or to inhere in the members of the class that they differentiate, come to be seen as independent from those members, to have a form of existence of their own, through the judging activity of the Understanding. That is, they come to be seen as an external contribution of the Understanding, rather than an internal determination of things themselves.

<sup>40</sup> C.f. Part I, C. ‘Immediate Knowing’: “In the Critical Philosophy, thinking is interpreted as being *subjective*, and its *ultimate*, unsurpassable determination is *abstract universality*, or formal identity; thus thinking is set in opposition to the truth, which is inwardly concrete universality” (EL §61, p.108/9).

<sup>41</sup> See CPR A568/B596-A583/B611.

“*God ... has to be cognised, i.e. determined by thinking. But as opposed to simple identity, all determination is for the understanding only a restriction, i.e. a negation as such. Hence, all reality is to be taken only without restriction, i.e., as indeterminate, and God, as the essential sum of all realities or as the supremely real Essence, becomes the simple abstraction; while the only determination that remains available for him is the just as strictly abstract determinacy of being. Abstract identity (which is what is here also called “concept”) and being are the two moments that reason seeks to unify*” (EL §49, p.94).

That is, Reason wants to unify ‘abstract identity’ i.e. the determinations of the Understanding in thought, or ‘concepts’, which are opposed to simple identity insofar as they always involve positing a restriction, or a difference, with being, which is just a simple abstraction, indeterminate insofar as it is an all inclusive category. To get a grip on what this unification would involve we should note that a simple abstraction is still a determination of thought and involves limitation or difference of a type, though it is of a peculiar nature insofar as it is the most general, inclusive determination and as such seems to be no determination or involve no limitation. To unify the two elements would be to introduce determination into this simple abstraction, to fill out its content. Alternatively, it would be to unify determinations under one category. Accordingly, Hegel believes there are two ways in which this can be achieved; they differ insofar as each adopts a different starting point – the end point of each being the starting point of the other.

“*Two ways or forms are admissible for this unification: we can begin with being and pass on from there to the abstraction of thinking; or ... we can effect the passage from abstraction to being*” (EL §50, p.94).

The re-statement of the dichotomy here is given by the fact that there appears to be an obstacle standing in the path of each way of unification. This obstacle is that determination in thought always involves positing a difference such that ‘being’ or ‘God’, or the ‘Absolute’ always remains untouched by, different from, or beyond our thought determinations and so no content can be seemingly introduced. It seems that there is always a difference held fixed between ‘being’ and the ‘abstraction of thinking’. As Hegel puts it when comparing both ways of unification:

“(W)hat the understanding sets against this second way is in-itself the same as was alleged before, namely that just as the universal is not found to be present in the empirical, so, conversely, the determinate is not contained in the universal – and the determinate here is “being”. In other words, “being” cannot be deduced from the concept or analysed out of it.” (EL §51, p.98).

This statement may seem particularly unclear, and Hegel is using terminology here established earlier in his discussion in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*. By ‘universal’ Hegel means to refer to one element of experience, which is taken to be contributed by thought, viz. determinations of universality and necessity, or the *form* of things. Distinct from this is ‘the empirical’, by which he means the manifold material sensuously given in intuition, which constitutes the other element of experience. What the Understanding sets against both ways of unification is the difference or mutual exclusivity of these elements of experience. The moment ‘the empirical’, as being, is determined in thought, it is changed. We don’t have ‘the empirical’ or being as it stands alone, but only what thought makes of it.

As we have mentioned, Hegel thinks that such a dichotomy of thought and being is far from insurmountable. It is the result of the Understanding’s process of distinction and its fixing of *differentiae*. We have also suggested that A. to C.(AA.) of the *Phenomenology* is, in part, to provide an etiological explanation of the appearance of such a dichotomy as part of a discursive dissolution of that dichotomy. What the comments from the *Encyclopaedia Logic* provide, is the form of such a dissolution. A dissolution of this dichotomy would require a demonstration of the admissibility of the two ways of unification mentioned in the *Encyclopaedia*: it would require a demonstration that we can, in fact, begin with being and pass on from there to the abstraction of thinking, and also make the return trip. The etiological explanation of the appearance of such a dichotomy would fit into such a demonstration insofar as the process of distinguishing, that seemingly leads to the dichotomy, is, for Hegel, on the contrary, a process whereby the unification of thought and being can be demonstrated. That is, the movement through which the dichotomy apparently occurs is actually *part* of the movement through which unification is demonstrated. As Hegel warns in respect of the stage that philosophy has reached in his day:

“(T)he fact that the object represented becomes the property of pure self-consciousness, its elevation to universality in general, is only one aspect of formative education, not its fulfilment” (PS 33, p.19)

What I am suggesting as a working hypothesis, is that the admissibility of the two ways of unification is to be established, in principle, in the opening transitions of the *Phenomenology*, the moves through A. and B. to C.(AA.). My claim is that in A. we witness the “emergence from the immediacy of substantial life” (PS 4, p.3) to a standpoint of universality in which consciousness becomes self-consciousness and the “object represented becomes the property of pure self-consciousness” (PS 33, p.19). This establishes, in principle, the admissibility of the first way for ‘us’ as readers of the *Phenomenology*. Section B. then follows and demonstrates the admissibility of the second way, such that ‘we’ can see that the two ways are, in essence, the same – each leading into the other and developing out of its other, forming a circle. The connection of the methods is given by the fact that:

“thinking the empirical world essentially means altering its empirical form, and transforming it into something-universal; so thinking exercises a *negative* activity with regard to that foundation as well: when the perceived material is determined by universality it does *not remain* in its first, empirical shape. With the removal and negation of the shell, the inner *import* of what is perceived is brought out (c.f. §’s 13, 23).” (EL §50, p. 96).

This connection ‘we’ will witness in the transition from A. to B., a new starting point will be given and a passage into the inner import of what is perceived will be achieved, there will be a removal and negation of the shell, of appearance, or as Hegel puts it in the *Phenomenology*: “(T)his curtain [of appearance] hanging before the inner world is ... drawn away” (PS 165, p. 103).

I have repeatedly mentioned that what I am suggesting is established in these transitions, is so established only ‘in principle’. I make this qualification because, for Hegel, “(T)he True is the whole” (PS 20, p.11). That is, a true demonstration of the movement from being to thought or thought to being, must be complete in terms of content, and the movement provided in A. through C.(AA.) is certainly not complete in terms of content (and in that regard a dichotomy results and the dialectic of the

*Phenomenology* is driven on through new sections). However, the structure of a true demonstration is present insofar as we witness a movement from being to thought which is shown to be a movement from thought to being. In this respect the prevalent view's favouring of intuition appears mistaken and the possibility of providing a demonstration or presentation of true knowledge becomes viable. The complete content of such a presentation remains, at that point, to be filled in.

Before we consider whether the hypothesis is borne out by Hegel's text, a word or two should be said about an issue that has thus far been passed over. It might be claimed that employing sections from the *Encyclopaedia Logic* to help construct a hypothesis regarding the *Phenomenology* may be an ill-founded strategy, the worries being the difference in scope of the two works and contention surrounding the precise role of the *Phenomenology* as an introduction to or preparation for the *Encyclopaedia Logic*.

First, it should be noted that the hypothesis by no means relies solely on the quotes borrowed from the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, but draws on, and I believe is in accordance with, a number of Hegel's writings, and in the first instance develops from the *Phenomenology* itself. Second, the part of the *Encyclopaedia Logic* that is drawn on is situated between Hegel's outline of a 'preliminary conception' of the task, function and structure of the *Logic* and his arrival at a more precise conception and division of the *Logic*, which is meant to help "...clarify the meaning of the *Logic* and to lead into the standpoint that is here given to it" (EL §25, p.64), being a "further introduction" (*Ibid.*) to the standpoint of the *Logic*. Hegel helpfully provides a synopsis of the relation of the *Phenomenology* to this new introductory passage (EL §'s26-78):

"In my *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which was ... described, when it was published, as the first part of the system of science, the procedure adopted was to begin from the first and simplest appearance of the spirit, from *immediate consciousness*, and to develop its dialectic right up to the standpoint of philosophical science, the necessity of which is shown by the progression. But for this purpose it was not possible to stick to the formal aspect of mere consciousness; for the standpoint of philosophical knowing is at the same time inwardly the richest in basic import and the most concrete one; so when it emerged as the result [of the development], it presupposed also the concrete shapes of consciousness, such as morality, ethical life, art, and religion. Hence,



the development of the *content*, or of the subject matters of special parts of philosophical science, falls directly within that development of consciousness which seems at first to be restricted just to what is formal; that development has to take place behind the back of consciousness so to speak, inasmuch as the content is related to consciousness as what is *in-itself*. This makes the presentation more complicated, and what belongs to the concrete parts [of the System] already falls partly within that introduction—The examination that will be undertaken here ... is to contribute to the insight that the questions about the nature of *cognition*, about *faith* and so on, that confront us in the [realm of] representation, and which we take to be fully *concrete*, are in point of fact reducible to *simple* determinations of thought, which only get their genuine treatment in the *Logic*.” (EL §25, pp.64-65)

So, the *Phenomenology* already comprises some content that will be more properly explicated in the individual parts of the system like the *Logic*, and the new introductory passage here in the *Logic* is to supplement the preparatory work already carried out in the *Phenomenology*, contributing to insights reached there. We should not be surprised then, to find certain congruencies between the content of the *Phenomenology* and the content of this further introduction.

## 2. From Being to Thought

It now remains to be seen whether our hypothesis regarding the transitions from A. to C.(AA.) fits Hegel’s text. In the first instance we need to compare the first way or form of unification, beginning with being and passing onto the abstraction of thinking, with the movement through A. to B. in the *Phenomenology*, that is, with the movement through ‘Sense-certainty’, ‘Perception’, and ‘Force and the Understanding’. Perhaps the most important transition here, and not to mention the most difficult and confusing, is the latter one, that of ‘Force and the Understanding’ into B., and it is for that reason that the lion’s share of the discussion in this section has been given over to the ‘Force and the Understanding’ and its famous example of the ‘inverted world’.

Now, obviously the starting point of the first way of unification is being, and as Hegel notes in the *Encyclopaedia*: “(A)s far as beginning with being is concerned,

this being, as what is immediate, presents itself as determined as an infinite manifold, as a world in all its fullness" (EL §50, p.94). In 'Sense-certainty', the first form of consciousness observed in A., the starting-point is the same: immediately presented being, preserved in all its fullness:

"(T)he knowledge or knowing which is at the start or is immediately our object cannot be anything else but immediate knowledge itself, a knowledge of the immediate or of what simply *is* ... Because of its concrete content sense-certainty immediately appears as the *richest* kind of knowledge, indeed a knowledge of infinite wealth for which no bounds can be found" (PS 90/91, p.58)

Sense-certainty holds that consciousness has an immediate access to being, that is to say, it holds that what is immediately given in sense-experience is actual being and not some mediated presentation of it. Accordingly, in experiencing an individual sense-object such as 'this house' or 'this tree', consciousness is here certain that the particular individual house or tree is simply given without any form of mediation. What is putatively given therefore, cannot be reduced to any properties or qualities shared by a whole range of objects, it is not something predicable of anything else, rather what is given is the unique essence of that individual thing, prior to any conceptualisation of it. In this respect the knowledge provided in Sense-certainty is to be seen as wholly intuitive.

"All that it says about what it knows is just that it *is*; and its truth contains nothing but the sheer *being* of the thing [*Sache*]. Consciousness, for its part, is in this certainty only as a pure 'I'; or I am in it only as a pure 'This', and the object similarly only as a pure 'This'. I, *this* particular I, am certain of *this* particular thing ... here neither I nor the thing has the significance of a complex process of mediation: the 'I' does not have the significance of a manifold imagining or thinking; nor does the 'thing' signify something that has a host of qualities. On the contrary, the thing *is*, and it *is*, merely because it *is*. It *is*; this is the essential point for sense knowledge, and this pure *being*, or this simple immediacy, constitutes its *truth*. Similarly, certainty as a *connection* is an *immediate* pure connection: consciousness is 'I', nothing more, a pure 'This'; the singular consciousness knows a pure 'This', or the single item. (PS 91, pp.58-9).

Insofar as Sense-certainty claims that consciousness enjoys immediate access to being, there is at the outset, no antithetical or oppositional relationship here between consciousness and being. However, while this is what Sense-certainty is supposed to be, we find that when we attend to an actual instance of it this far from being the case. Instead we find that pure being at once splits up into what we have called the two 'Thises', one 'This' as 'I', and the other 'This' as object" (PS 92, p.59), and furthermore, the 'I' is taken in Sense-certainty to be unessential and mediated: it is, only as a knowing, which depends upon the object as that which is true or essential (PS 93, p.59).

The problem that then develops for this form of consciousness is one concerning the content of its object, of the unique essence of the individual thing it apprehends, the 'This' as object. It seems that the content constantly changes from something which is, to something which *is not*, and that what abides throughout is a universal, indifferent to change. For example, Hegel notes, if the 'This' is the object simply as it is 'here' and 'now', then 'here' might be a tree or 'now' might be night, but if I turn around 'here' *is not* a tree but something else, say a house, and if I check later to see if 'now' is still night, it *is not*, instead it has changed into morning (PS 96/98, p.60-1). Hegel's point is that Sense-certainty's 'This' as object, as the unique essence of the individual thing it apprehends, is far from unique, instead it seems that the 'This' shows itself to be "a *mediated simplicity*, or a *universality*" (PS 98, p.61). So, if consciousness remains committed to Sense-certainty it seems that knowledge of the unique essence of an individual thing will be unattainable: apprehension, it seems, will fail to reach such a unique essence.

Now, Hegel allows Sense-certainty to respond before drawing any firm conclusion and we witness Sense-certainty adjusting its position to maintain this unique essence as something unique to an individual. At first the 'This' of the object is maintained as a unique essence because it is *my* object, because it is unique to this 'I', this subject's experience (PS 100, p.61), but here the 'I' is just as universal as 'This', and the unique essence is again found to change from something which is to something which is not, while what abides throughout is the 'I'. 'I' might assert that 'here' is a tree, but another 'I' might assert that 'here' *is not* a tree but a house, and both have the same immediacy, certainty and assurance, both have the "same authentication". Consequently, "the one truth vanishes in the other" (PS 101, p.61) and what remains is precisely what is not unique: the I as universal (PS 102, p.62).

A final attempt is made to maintain the unique essence of the individual object by restricting the apprehension of it to a pure act of intuiting in which other times, places and subjects are ignored. In this pure act, all the previous distinctions and oppositions that have developed throughout the chapter are suppressed, and what we are presented with is a self-identical, instantaneous and purely immediate relation (PS 103/4, pp.62-3). The putative knowledge of such a pure act, the unique essence, can only be expressed ostensively, it can only be pointed to. The difficulty that Hegel brings out here is essentially the same as was noted before, viz. the instant the unique 'This' is pointed to as 'here' and 'now' it is no longer 'here' and 'now', instead 'here' and 'now' is a 'This' which *is not* the unique 'This' that was pointed to. If Sense-certainty insists that the 'This' remains the same, acknowledging that 'This' can be applied over a variety of instances and hence can be pointed out, then it equally acknowledges that 'This' is a universal, indifferent to the unique essence that Sense-certainty claims is given in its immediate relation to things.

It is only after this final attempt to maintain its view of its relation to, and knowledge of, being as immediate, that Sense-certainty is willing to acknowledge that the individual things it encounters in sense-experience cannot coherently be said to be immediately given unique essences. Instead it seems that what *is*, what does not pass away into non-being, is the universal, and consciousness, in the form of Perception, now readily accepts that what is sensuously present to it is to be taken as a universal (PS 111, p.67).

Before we consider Perception however, a word or two should be said about the movement of Sense-certainty in relation to our hypothesis. We observed that the starting point of Sense-certainty aligned with the starting-point of the first way of unification, that is, both started with being 'as what is immediate'. But Hegel provides more detail about this first way of unification in the *Encyclopaedia* than we have thus far noted. He claims that "in the first way *being* is common both sides, and the antithesis concerns only the distinction between what is singularised and what is universal" (EL §51, p.98). That is, insofar as an oppositional relationship between two elements, or a dichotomy, is seen to develop along this first way, it is not one that appears to be between thought and being, but rather one between the singular and universal. This observation certainly seems to fit the movement we have witnessed in Sense-certainty and it will be seen to fit the general movement through A. to B.

In Sense-certainty “(O)ur approach to the object must ... be *immediate* or *receptive*; we must alter nothing in the object as it presents itself” (PS 90, p.58), and thus in apprehending a sensuously presented individual there is to be no abstraction from its unique essence, no taking of it as a universal, the individual must be apprehended *qua* singular, unique essence. Of course, Sense-certainty believes this to be possible and so views the universal, the ‘This’, ‘here’, ‘now, and the ‘I’, to be opposed to the singular. What we witness in Sense-certainty then, is the development of this opposition of singular and universal to a point of apparent resolution – Perception – and though there is a distinction made between ‘This’ as object and ‘I’, being is, throughout, ‘common to both sides’.

Now, Perception accepts that what is sensuously present to it is a universal, that is to say, it has learned the lesson of Sense-certainty. What that lesson taught was that this universal resulted from the failure of Sense-certainty to immediately apprehend the ‘This’. It resulted from the constant passing over of the ‘This’ into a ‘not This’. Perception’s acceptance of the universal as that which is sensuously present to it, is the acceptance of the ‘This’ as ‘not This’—as not being the ‘unique essence’ of Sense-certainty; it is the establishment of ‘This’ (universal) instead as a simple togetherness of a plurality of ‘Thises’ (universals), as a plurality of spatial and temporal instances. In other words, the universal present to Perception is “in its simplicity a *mediated* universal” (PS 112, p.67) and its mediated nature is expressed sensuously in the form of properties “one being the negative of the other” (PS 113, p.68), each a simple universal, indifferent to the others.

The singular being of Perception then, is an “abstract universal medium” that may be characterised as an “Also” (PS 113, p.68-9) – a kind of focal point in which multiple mutually indifferent properties are co-instantiated, but with the proviso that this is *nothing over and above* a mere focal point for this collection of properties, which are themselves indifferent to it. Here the object is wholly identified with the various properties, it is an ‘Also’. As Hegel puts it:

“(T)his abstract universal medium, which can be called simply ‘thinghood’ or ‘pure essence’, is nothing else than what Here and Now have proved themselves to be, viz. *a simple togetherness* of a plurality; but the many are, *in their determinateness*, simple universals themselves. The salt is a simple Here, and at the same time manifold; it is white and *also* tart, *also* cubical in shape, of a

specific gravity, etc. All these many properties are in a single simple 'Here', in which, therefore they interpenetrate; none has a different Here from the others, but each is everywhere, in the same Here in which the others are. And, at the same time, without being separated by different Heres, they do not affect each other in this interpenetration. The whiteness does not affect the cubical shape, and neither affects the tart taste, etc; on the contrary, since each is itself a simple relating of self to self it leaves the others alone, and is connected to them only by the indifferent Also. This Also is thus the pure universal itself, or the medium, the 'thinghood', which holds them together in this way" (PS 113, pp.68-9).

This characterisation of the object of Perception as an Also quickly unravels however, as the properties are said to be determinate and this conflicts with their putative mutual indifference:

"if the many determinate properties were strictly indifferent to one another, if they were simply and solely self-related, they would not be determinate; for they are only determinate in so far as they *differentiate* themselves from one another, and *relate* themselves *to others* as to their opposites. Yet: as thus opposed to one another they cannot be together in the simple unity of their medium, which is just as essential to them as negation" (PS 114, p.69).

The difficulty is that in being determinate, properties like 'white' and 'tart' cannot merely be indifferent to one another, but must stand in a contrapostive relation to one another. It is only in virtue of this contraposition that they are determinate. But if this is the case, then the basic focal point of these properties must be something *over and above* such a simple medium. After all, the harmony of the various properties (white, tart, etc.) in a *single* focal point depended on the indifference of the properties to each other and to this focal point. The focal point remained single because of this indifference. However, if the properties are independent, distinct or contraposed to one another, they cannot all be identified with a single focal point, unless this focal point is actually something over and above the properties – a *substratum*, say – which supports the properties and in which they inhere. Accordingly, the 'abstract universal medium' of Perception can be characterised as more than a simple indifferent unity, more than mere 'thinghood', it is a One as well – a singular Thing exclusive of the properties, a substratum:

“the differentiation of the properties, in so far as it is not an indifferent differentiation but is exclusive, each property negating the others, thus falls outside of this simple medium; and the medium, therefore, is not merely an Also, an indifferent unity, but a *One* as well, a unity which *excludes* an other. The One is the *moment of negation*; it is itself quite simply a relation of self to self and it excludes another; and it is that by which ‘thinghood’ is determined as a Thing” (Ibid.).

The object of Perception then, is both an Also and a One. That is, it is both a plurality of universal properties and a singular thing, and these two interrelated but incompatible ways of characterising the object quickly leads consciousness, in the form of Perception, into trouble. We do not need to consider all the details of consciousness’ difficulties here, it is sufficient to note that the moment consciousness takes one characterisation of the object to be correct, a discrepancy arises such that the other characterisation seems correct and is adopted.

This cycling between the characterisations leads consciousness to realise that perceiving is not simply a pure apprehension of the truth, but rather that it alters the truth (PS 118, pp.71-2). Consciousness then simply needs to “hold fast” to the object in “its true character” and “if, in the course of perceiving it, something turns up which contradicts it, this is to be recognised as a reflection of mine” (PS 119, p.72), i.e. of consciousness as Perception. Naturally, the problem that consciousness runs into with this new strategy, is that of determining which characterisation, the One or the Also, accords to the true character of the object and which accords to the delusive influence of Perception. Is the object truly a One and Perception responsible for dividing this unity into independent exclusive properties, or is the object truly an Also and Perception responsible for unifying the plurality of properties into a One? As before, no clear answer is forthcoming as the moment the true character is taken to be one way, it cycles or comes to be seen as being the other way. Consciousness’s strategy of accepting responsibility for the untrue aspect in its perceiving of things doesn’t help it to render the two characterisations of the thing consistent.

Consciousness as Perception then tries a different tack. It takes the object to be *both* unified and diverse, but makes a distinction regarding the relative essentiality of the unity and diversity. The plurality of properties are taken to be inessential, but, as before, it is realised that it is only these properties that give the object any determinacy, that distinguish it from anything else. They are then *necessary* to the

object as a singular thing, and the new distinction of essential and unessential collapses. The object is both unified and diverse, the various characterisations of the object seem equally true, each constantly giving way to the other, and consciousness's attempts to hold fast to one characterisation over against the other all come to nought.

The overall problem in this to-ing and fro-ing of Perception is that consciousness's conception of universality in relation to singularity is inadequate:

"Thus the singular being of sense does indeed vanish in the dialectical movement of immediate certainty and becomes universality, but it is only a *sensuous universality*. My 'meaning' has vanished, and perception takes the object as it is *in itself*, or as a universal as such. Singular being therefore emerges in the object as true singleness, as the in-itself of the One, or as reflectedness-into-self. But this is still a *conditioned* being-for-self *alongside which* appears another being-for-self, the universality which is opposed to, and conditioned by singular being. But these two contradictory extremes are not merely *alongside each other* but in a single unity, or in other words, the defining characteristic common to both, viz. 'being-for-self', is burdened with opposition generally, i.e. it is at the same time *not* a 'being-for-self. The sophistry of perception seeks to save these moments from their contradiction, and it seeks to lay hold on the truth, by distinguishing between the *aspects*, by sticking to the 'Also' and to the 'in so far', and finally, by distinguishing the 'unessential' aspect from an 'essence' which is opposed to it. But these expedients, instead of warding off deception in the process of apprehension, prove themselves on the contrary to be quite empty; and the truth which is supposed to be won by this logic of the perceptual process proves to be in one and the same respect the opposite [of itself] and thus to have as its essence a universality which is devoid of distinctions and determinations" (PS 130, p.77).

In the movement from Sense-certainty to Perception, consciousness learned to accept the singular unique essence as a universal. But in grasping the singular essence as universal, consciousness merely conceived of universality in terms of abstract self-identity, that is, it conceived of universality in terms of the suppression of differentiation, merely as the *result* of negation or mediation of the negative. After all, consciousness only had the experience of Sense-certainty behind it and this was all it learnt of the universal there – the universal is that which was seen to *result* from the passing over of the 'unique essence' of Sense-certainty into non-being, and in that sense was *determined by* that passing as that which remained *irrespective* of it – that



which is *indifferent* to such passing or fluctuation, that which *abides* in spite of it and *is*.

It is this limited conception of universality as resulting from, but exclusive of negation that leads Perception into difficulty. Each of the sensuous properties, as a universal, is treated as “a simple relating of self to self” which “leaves the others alone” (PS 113, p.69) and the focal point in which they interpenetrate, as a universal medium, is equally indifferent – an Also. However, as Hegel notes, “(I)n the relationship which has thus emerged it is only the character of positive universality that is at first observed and developed” (PS 114, p.69), that is to say, there is more to this universality than the suppression of differentiation, than indifference. It is also the *result* of differentiation, is determined by it, and as such, this universality itself differentiates – it is *not* the fleeting content of Sense-certainty, it is that which abides in sense-experience. In other words, insofar as this universality is determined as abstract self-identity, it is *exclusive*. It is not the all-inclusive object of Sense-certainty from which nothing is to be omitted. But if this universality is characterised simply as an Also of indifferent properties, if this particular piece of salt is nothing more than the collection of indifferent properties that constitute it, then it’s not clear in what sense this salt is determinate or exclusive. That is, if the properties as universals themselves, fail to differentiate themselves from one another, fail to be *exclusive*, then this piece of salt as their universal medium, fails to have any determination in virtue of which it can be differentiated from any other collection of properties. At that point it’s not clear that we’re dealing with universality at all and not simply the all inclusive object of Sense-certainty. So, in accordance with its conception of universality, consciousness must take the properties as exclusive, as differentiating themselves from one another and relating themselves to others as to their opposites. However, in being true to its conception of universality as that which *results* from differentiation, the differentiation cannot be allowed to fall *within* the universal, and so this piece of salt, as the universal medium of the differentiated properties, must be exclusive of those properties, it must be something over against them, a substratum or One. As Hegel puts it:

“as thus opposed to one another they [the properties] cannot be together in the simple unity of their medium, which is just as essential to them as negation; the differentiation of the properties, insofar as it is not an indifferent differentiation,

but is exclusive, each property negating the others, thus falls outside of this simple medium; and the medium, therefore, is not merely an Also, an indifferent unity, but a *One* as well, a unity which *excludes* an other" (PS 114, p.69).

Of course, the One or substratum itself, in being exclusive or independent from its properties, proves to be indeterminate and the familiar to-ing and fro-ing of Perception then ensues as consciousness attempts to maintain, as it did in Sense-certainty, the coherence of its conception. The overall point is that, in being conceived of as abstract self-identity, universality is taken *internally* to admit no differentiation – as an Also it is indifferent to the differentiation of the properties and as a One it is exclusive of their differentiation, it only results from differentiation which is *external* to it, and it is this partitioning off or fixing of the differentiating aspect in something *external* to universality which fails to take us far beyond the all-inclusive, indeterminate object of Sense-certainty. What consciousness learns through the failure of its conception here is precisely that the differentiation is to be located *within* universality, that the indifference of the Also and the exclusivity of the One are not to be located in different sustaining elements, but are instead to be located in a single unity, or put another way, that universality is *both* self-differentiating and constant in this differentiation, that which abides through it. As Hegel expresses it, in this new conception "what we now have is *unconditioned absolute universality*, and consciousness here for the first time truly enters the realm of the Understanding" (PS 129, p.77).

Now, before we go on to consider the developments of the 'Force and the Understanding' chapter of the *Phenomenology* we should note the importance of Perception in regard to our hypothesis. We will recall that in Perception, while being is still the object of consciousness and this being is still given sensuously, consciousness at first assumes that it simply apprehends its object, but subsequently comes to learn instead that it takes its object to be a certain way (PS 118, p.71-2). It takes responsibility for one of the two incompatible characterisations of its object, separating pure apprehension of its object from the deceptive way it takes the object to be, and in this way hopes to maintain its conception of the universal as abstract self-identity. That is to say, that here as we move away from the immediacy of Sense-certainty, we begin to see a clear example of the fixity of consciousness's conceptions or thoughts and their role in the generation of a dichotomy of thought and being.

Consciousness's conception of the universal as abstract self-identity leads it to make the distinction between a pure or true apprehension of its object and the object *as it appears* to consciousness, or put another way, the object as it is for itself and as it is for another. This distinction is essentially a separation of being from thought, or, at least, a separation of being as the object of Perception from thought as the activity of reflection attributed to consciousness in Perception. Consciousness either accepts responsibility for breaking up an intrinsic unity (One) into a plurality of independent properties, thereby taking itself as the medium or the Also (PS 119, p.72), or it accepts responsibility for uniting (synthesising) a plurality of diverse properties (Also) into a unity, thereby taking itself as such a unity, a One (PS 121, pp.73-4). In each case however, by taking either the diversity or unity to be *external* to the object, consciousness is holding to the truth of its conception of universality as abstract self-identity. After all, both the options: accepting the true nature of the object as a One or accepting it as an Also, involve maintaining that that which differentiates the object as truly a One or truly an Also, is extrinsic to it. In sticking to the presumed truth of its conception of universality as abstract self-identity, consciousness prevents any determinacy from entering the object itself, and thereby perpetuates its own discomfort.

If we look more closely at the separation here, then we will see that it accords to the re-statement of the dichotomy in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* mentioned earlier. In the terms of the re-statement “(A)bstractive identity ... and being” as the ‘simple abstraction’ “are the two moments that reason seeks to unify” (EL §49, p.94). These elements are dichotomous insofar as abstract identity is an identity in virtue of an opposition or difference, an identity that *results from* difference, “a negation as such” (Ibid.), whereas simple abstraction is rather an abstraction from all opposition or difference. Now, the starting point of Sense-certainty as immediate being in its ‘perfect entirety’ appears as the simple abstraction and the object of Perception that results from the movement through Sense-certainty, as a universal is an abstract identity, that is, it is the identity of what remains constant in the dissolution of Sense-certainty's object. In fact, as such, as that which is determined through the dissolution of Sense-certainty's object or as the *truth* of Sense-certainty's object, it is equally the negation of that object; were it not for the universal, the ‘This’, ‘I’, ‘Here’ and ‘Now’, Sense-certainty's ‘unique essence’, the “sheer *being* of the thing” (PS 91, p.58) would remain as true. As the negation of Sense-certainty's object, as *not* that object, the

universal as abstract identity is set in opposition to simple abstraction. According to Hegel's demonstration in Sense-certainty, however, the universal is what Sense-certainty reveals *itself* to be, i.e. this universality is not to be taken as independent from the simple abstraction which characterises the starting point, rather this simple abstraction is seen to involve negation, to be *internally* differentiated. We may no longer characterise it as simple abstraction, but the important point is that we haven't here moved from one kind of being to another, diverse kind; we remain with what was characterised as 'simple abstraction', only now we see this as being internally differentiated. So, in holding fast to its conception of universality as abstract self-identity, refusing to allow its object to be internally differentiated, consciousness in Perception, maintains the dichotomy of being and thought, and is for that reason unable to reconcile its taking of its object as equally an Also and a One.

It is the 'Force & the Understanding' chapter that brings about the major transition from section A. to that of B. and, according to our hypothesis, the connection of the two ways admissible for the unification of being and thought is to be found in this transition. Here then we should expect to see a culmination of sorts to the first way of unification, and a transition to a new starting point constituted by the 'abstraction of thinking'.

As Understanding, consciousness has improved upon its conception of universality as abstract self-identity and now, at least implicitly, conceives of universality as unconditioned. Accordingly, its object is no longer the Also of indifferent properties that passes over into the *opposing* unity of the One, rather consciousness's object is now this movement or passing over as an essential and necessary movement – as constitutive of consciousness's object. As such, this object is Force:

"In other words, the "matters" posited as independent directly pass over into their unity, and their unity directly unfolds its diversity, and this once again reduces itself to unity. But this movement is called *force*" (PS 136, p.81).

This object is not then directly or immediately present in sense-experience, rather it is developed or revealed through sense-experience. It is an internal connection of the matters of Perception, one could say, their deeper underlying unity, and accordingly the world of perception remains for consciousness, by and large, unchanged.

However, this is not to say that Force and the expression of Force are two substantially diverse elements. Of course, there is a distinction to be made between them and as distinguished Force is an exclusive unity or One, diverse from the matters of its expression, but this Force is only determined as such in contradistinction to the diversity of its expression, that is, it owes its being to its expression – it only *is* as a unity through being expressed. Likewise, the expression of Force is only determined as such in contradistinction to Force as an exclusive unity. In such a distinction then, the moments distinguished constantly pass into their other, they do not stand firm as opposite extremes.

“Consequently, these moments are not divided into two independent extremes offering each other only an opposite extreme: their essence rather consists simply and solely in this, that each *is* solely through the other, and what each thus is it immediately no longer is, since it *is* the other. They have thus, in fact, no substances of their own which might support and maintain them. The *Notion* of Force rather preserves itself as the *essence* in its very *actuality*; Force, as *actual*, exists simply and solely in its *expression*, which at the same time is nothing else than a supersession of itself ... Thus the truth of Force remains only the *thought* of it; the moments of its actuality, their substances and their movement, collapse unresistingly into an undifferentiated unity ... This true essence of things has now the character of not being immediately for consciousness: on the contrary, consciousness has a mediated relation to the inner being and, as the Understanding, *looks through this mediating play of forces into the true background of Things*” (PS 141/143, p.86).

So, as Understanding, consciousness grasps that the truth of Force, this inner being of things, is not the sensuously immediate, but rather is notional and mediate (PS 143, pp.86-7). As a result the sensuous, perceived world takes on a negative significance for consciousness; the truth of consciousness’s object lies beyond the sensuous world in a supersensible inner realm.

“Within this *inner truth*, as the *absolute universal* which has been purged of the *antithesis* between the universal and the individual and has become the object of the Understanding, there now opens up above the *sensuous* world, which is the world of *appearance*, a *supersensible* world which henceforth is the *true* world,

above the vanishing *present* world there opens up a permanent *beyond*” (PS 144, p.87).

As notional in nature, this supersensible inner realm is not alien to consciousness, not some beyond which cannot be accessed, as if it were some intrinsically diverse kind of being. On the contrary, as notional this supersensible inner is of the same nature as consciousness and, strictly speaking, in looking into this inner realm consciousness is self-consciousness.

Nevertheless, this notion in its nature is determined as nothing but the expression it receives through appearance, viz. the constant and immediate movement or passing of differentiated elements into their opposite, and as such, at least taken immediately, seems to lack any determinateness beyond its universality. That is, consciousness fails to see anything in it, least of all itself, and it appears as a merely empty beyond of the object.

“The inner world is, for consciousness, still a *pure beyond*, because consciousness does not as yet find itself in it. It is *empty*, for it is merely the nothingness of appearance, and positively the *simple* or *unitary* universal” (PS 146, p.88).

Now, of course, if nothing more is said of the inner world then it would remain forever an empty and therefore unknowable beyond, and there would seem to be a permanent divide between being and thought. In fact, as we will see, consciousness as Understanding comes to a view somewhat similar to this by the end of the chapter, but not because the inner world is a mere beyond, rather because, yet again, its conception of universality is lacking.

There is, then, more to be said regarding this inner world. As Hegel notes “(T)he inner world ... *comes from* the world of appearance which has mediated it; in other words, appearance is its essence and, in fact, its filling” (PS 147, p.89). That is to say, as being simply the expression it receives through appearance, this inner world is what remains constant or abides throughout appearance, the truth of appearance, which is universal difference. This is just what consciousness has learned through its experience of Sense-certainty and Perception: in the dissolution of its object in Sense-certainty consciousness discovered immediate being as universality, and in the

dissolution of its perceptual object consciousness discovered this universality to be internally or self differentiated, and present to consciousness only through this differentiation, i.e. mediately. As this mediation or self-differentiation constitutes the essence of the inner, supersensible world, or this inner supersensible world essentially is this self-differentiation, this world is universal difference.

Hegel is quite clear in putting matters this way, that “(W)e completely misunderstand this if we think that the supersensible world is *therefore* the sensuous world, or the world as it exists for immediate sense-certainty and perception” (PS 147, p.89). rather this supersensible world, as universal difference, is the world of sense-knowledge and perception “posited as superseded or as in truth an *inner world*” (Ibid.). That is, the immediate completely transformed or revealed as being, in truth, universal or conceptual.

Understanding initially conceives of this universal difference in terms of the laws of natural phenomena:

“(T)his difference is expressed in the *law*, which is the *stable* image of unstable appearance. Consequently, the *supersensible* world is an *inert realm of laws* which, though beyond the perceived world – for this exhibits law only through incessant change – is equally *present* in it and is its direct tranquil image.

This realm of laws is indeed the truth for the Understanding, and that truth has its *content* in the law” (PS 149/150, pp.90-1).

However, in conceiving of the inner world in this way, consciousness falls into difficulty. Basically stated the problem is that the inner realm of laws does not “fill out the world of appearance”, it is not “the entire presence of appearance” (PS 150, p.91). instead appearance seems to retain an aspect not captured in the inner realm of laws. This is due, again, to consciousness’s conception of universality. Here universality as that which *abides* or remains *constant* throughout Perception is the truth or essence, and it is conceived of simply, as a stable or constant unity which is internally differentiated, but conceived of in this way, universality is indifferent to the specific nature of the differentiation through which it is constituted. This universality is *internally* differentiated, and so the contrapostive relation of the differentiated moments taken individually, must be internal to a *unity*, these moments must constitute a unity as that which abides or is stable through their mutual difference.

Each differentiated moment is not then preserved in its determinacy, or each particular difference is not preserved, rather, what each particular difference is essentially, or in truth, is just universal difference – this unity. That is, the nature of the differentiation in law is left indeterminate, it is merely stable differentiation. Accordingly, law as such universality, as a stable image of unstable appearance, is indifferent to actual appearance that constitutes it. “with every change of circumstance the law has a different actuality” (Ibid.) but the law *qua* universality remains the same.

This defect shows up in the realm of laws itself in the form of a collapse of specific, distinct laws into one unified, overarching law as their truth, in which the determinateness of the specific laws is dissolved. That is to say, the defect becomes manifest in consciousness’s object – the realm of laws – in the form of a collapse of that object’s own, internal determinacy. As *a* law, law involves determinacy, it can be contrasted with other laws. But this contrast collapses because as *law*, i.e. as internally differentiated *universality*, it is indifferent to the determinacy of its constitutive moments, the moments are merely implicit essentialities, and so the difference of one particular law from another collapses. There may be indefinitely *many* distinct laws, but:

“this plurality is itself rather a defect; for it contradicts the principle of the Understanding for which, as consciousness of the simple inner world, the True is the implicitly universal *unity*. It must therefore let the many laws collapse into *one* law, just as, e.g. the law by which a stone falls, and the law by which heavenly bodies move, have been grasped as one law” (Ibid.)

So, in allowing the laws to thus coincide in a unity as their essence or truth, the specific, determinate character of the laws is overcome, the unity is indifferent to the specific nature of the differentiation through which it is constituted:

“what is found is, in fact, not the unity of *these specific* laws, but a law which leaves out their specific character; just as the *one* law which combines in itself the laws of falling terrestrial bodies and of the motions of the heavenly bodies, in fact expresses neither law. The unification of all laws in *universal attraction* expresses no other content than just the *mere Notion of law itself* ... Universal



attraction merely asserts that *everything has a constant difference in relation to other things*" (Ibid.).

This Notion of law is then, for consciousness here, the true inner being. But it lacks the determinateness of specific laws, which therefore remains outside the supersensible inner being, in the sensuous world. This determinateness cannot be the true or the essential then, it is instead a vanishing moment and the Notion of law is indifferent to it. So, we see the same problem here, that the determinateness is that through which the Notion is constituted, the determinateness is its expression, its being, and yet the Notion seems indifferent to the determinateness – the determinateness seems to be inessential to the Notion.

This indifference then, as the defect, masks the inner truth of law, which is that the unstable appearance or the particular difference of its moments, are *essential* to it.

"in the law the difference itself is grasped *immediately* and taken up into the universal, thereby, however, giving the moments whose relation is expressed by the law a *subsistence* in the form of indifferent and [merely] implicit essentialities" (PS 151, p.92).

As indifferent, implicit essentialities, the moments are overlooked by Understanding, and this is just what the indifference of law to actual appearance consists in. Law then, is constituted as a duality. On the one hand, the determinate differences are present in it as overlooked, implicit essentialities, that is, as merely indifferent, independent moments, lacking any necessary connection to one another within the unity, and on the other, it is the unity or ground of these moments, their essence.

"The law is thereby present in a twofold manner: once, as law in which the differences are expressed as independent moments; and also in the form of a *simple* withdrawal into itself, which again can be called *Force* ... In this sense, *simple* electricity, e.g. is *Force*; but the expression of difference falls within the *law*; this difference is positive and negative electricity ... Electricity, as *simple Force*, is indifferent to its law – *to be* positive and negative; and if we call the former its Notion but the latter its being, then its Notion is indifferent to its being.

It merely *has* this property, which just means this property is not *in itself* necessary to it" (PS 152, pp.92-3).

The Force may have been expressed in another way to the way in which it was, that is, there doesn't seem to be any necessary connection between the law in truth, i.e. Force, and the differences expressed as independent moments in the law. But if the Force is indifferent in this way to the law, then it seems that it is not clear there is any substantive content to it as constitutive of the inner being of things. Either the Force does not necessitate the differences expressed as independent moments in the law, in which case we cannot be sure that these differences are differences belonging to the Force, and therefore that Force is their essence, or the independent moments, the differences as expressed, themselves remain indifferent to one another – they are not necessary for one another, and then, equally, we cannot be sure that Force as their unity constitutes their essence (PS 152/153, pp.92-4). Put another way, either the Understanding is responsible for the independence of the moments in which the differences are expressed, or it is responsible for the unity of Force as the essence of the moments. In either case "(T)he difference ... is not a difference *in its own self*: either the universal, Force, is indifferent to the division which is the law, or the ... parts, of the law are indifferent to one another". it is "not a *difference belonging to the thing itself*" (PS 154, p.94).

In a certain sense, what is occurring here is a replay of the difficulties encountered in the sensuous world with Perception, although now at the level of the supersensible world. In Perception consciousness's object characterised as the universal medium of indifferent properties, the Also, stood in opposition to that object's determinacy as an exclusive One. Here, in 'Force and the Understanding', the supersensible inner realm as consciousness's object, displays an analogous internal opposition. This realm as law is an internally differentiated universal, and in its unity or as an internally differentiated *whole*, it is indifferent to the determinacy of its differentiation. But as indifferent to this determinacy, there appears to be no internal or necessary link between the whole and the determinate, differentiated moments, that is, they seem to stand opposed to one another and consciousness falls back into its old strategy of taking responsibility for the deceptive appearance of opposition, in order to hold fast to its conception.

“this inner difference still falls, to begin with, only within the Understanding, and is not yet posited *in the thing itself*. It is, therefore, only its *own* necessity that is asserted by the Understanding; the difference, then, is posited by the Understanding in such a way that, at the same time, it is expressly stated that the difference is not a *difference belonging to the thing itself*. This necessity, which is merely verbal, is thus a recital of the moments constituting the cycle of necessity. The moments are indeed distinguished, but, at the same time, their difference is expressly said to be *not* a difference of the thing itself, and consequently is itself immediately cancelled again. This process is called ‘*explanation*’. A *law* is enunciated; from this, its implicitly universal element or ground is distinguished as *Force*; but it is said that this difference is no difference, rather the ground is constituted exactly the same as the law. The single occurrence of lightning, e.g., is apprehended as a universal, and this universal is enunciated as the *law* of electricity; the ‘*explanation*’ then condenses the *law* into *Force* as the essence of the law. This *Force*, then, is *so constituted* that when it is expressed, opposite electricities appear, which disappear again into one another; that is, *Force is constituted exactly the same as law*; there is said to be no difference whatever between them. The differences are the pure, universal expression of law, and pure *Force*; but both have the *same* content, the *same* constitution. Thus the difference *qua* difference of content, of the thing, is also again withdrawn” (*Ibid.* pp.94/95).

This strategy, far from solving the difficulty, exacerbates it by refusing to let the opposition fall within consciousness’s object. Instead, consciousness locates the appearance of opposition between the object’s unity and determinacy, in a sustaining element that is diverse from its object, viz. in the Understanding. This does not imply that consciousness’s conception of its object as an internally differentiated universality has changed, the aim of the strategy is, rather, to maintain this conception, but what it does imply is that this internal differentiation cannot be grasped in its determinacy by consciousness as the Understanding<sup>42</sup>. Here then, in

<sup>42</sup> The issue of delineating an internal or necessary link between the whole and its differentiated moments can be otherwise expressed in terms of a problematic relation of grounding. It seems that the Notion of the law that constitutes the inner being of things is inferred and derived from specific instances or manifestations of law in the sensuous world. That is to say, this Notion, though distinguished from the instances as their ground, is only understood on the basis of those instances it is supposed to ground. So it seems that there are two interrelated grounding relations present: one which runs from instances as ground to Notion as grounded, and the other which runs from Notion as ground to instances as grounded. (Or, if we take the sensuous world as what is, as being, and the Notion as thought, then we have one relation in which being is the ground for thought and another in which thought is the ground for being.) Now, in claiming responsibility for being unable to find a necessary link between the Notion of law and its determinate instances, i.e. in claiming that it necessarily makes a

taking responsibility for the deceptive appearance of opposition, in asserting that the difference between the unity and the determinate moments which constitute it is *not* a difference of the thing *itself*, consciousness fixes its object as an internally differentiated beyond, the differentiations of which it cannot know. That is, what initially seems to be a qualitative difference, a difference in *content*, is taken to be a merely *formal difference* in explanation. In other words, consciousness can know this inner or beyond as the truth, but cannot know the internal constitution of this truth, its determinacy. It is an internally differentiated but inert substrate in a sensuous covering.

Here then, we see again a clear example of the fixity of consciousness's conceptions that Hegel alluded to in his 'Preface' as well as the *Difference* essay, and its role in the generation of a dichotomy of thought and being. We may recall that in the latter essay he noted that the Understanding or intellect (*Verstand*) is the source of dichotomy, through its determining action of setting limits: he also noted that "in striving to enlarge itself into the Absolute, the intellect only reproduces itself ... and so mocks itself" (DF, p.90), what it seeks remains forever beyond the differences and antitheses it delineates, differences which here it holds do not belong to the thing itself. In the former text we were told that the "task nowadays consists ... in freeing determinate thoughts from their fixity" (PS 33, p.20), and again in the *Difference* essay "(T)he sole interest of Reason is to suspend such rigid antitheses" (DF, p.90). The viewpoint of the Understanding then, at this juncture of the *Phenomenology* must be mistaken and indeed, if what we have witnessed so far is an emergence from immediacy or the first way of unification, then were the Understanding to be correct in its outlook here, such a way would be inadmissible – it would lead only to a point

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distinction between the Notion and instances which, in truth, is no distinction. Understanding acknowledges that what has been distinguished as ground and grounded collapses, or is in truth the same. That is to say it acknowledges that there is a necessary link between the two grounding relations, though it fails to comprehend the *determinate nature of the link*. As Hegel puts it in the *Science of Logic*:

"in this mode of explanation the two opposite directions of the ground relation are present without being apprehended in their determinate relation. The ground is ... that from which the phenomenon is to be understood; but *conversely*, it is the ground that is inferred from the phenomenon and the former is understood from the latter. The main business of this reflection consists ... in finding the grounds from the phenomenon, that is, converting the immediate phenomenon into the form of reflected being; consequently the ground, instead of being in and for itself and self-subsistent, is, on the contrary, the posited and derived. Now since in this procedure the ground is derived from the phenomenon and its determinations are based on it, the phenomenon certainly flows quite smoothly and with a favourable wind from its ground. But in this way, knowledge has not advanced a step; its movement is confined within a difference of form which the same procedure inverts and sublates." (SL, p.459 'Remark: Formal Method of Explanation From Tautological Grounds').

The result is confusion and misapprehension: "...one finds oneself in a kind of witches' circle in which determinations of real being and determinations of reflection, ground and grounded, phenomena and phantoms, run riot in indiscriminate company and enjoy equal rank with one another" (SL, p.461). This is just the kind of result we will see in the *Phenomenology* with consciousness as Understanding.

where we can comprehend the functioning of the Understanding, but where such Understanding cannot grasp the object itself in its true determinacy. It seems the Understanding would serve only to isolate us from being. The implication is that ‘we’ as observers of this movement (re)traced in ‘A. Consciousness’ can see that the Understanding is mistaken in its viewpoint and is in error in sticking “to the inert unity of its object” (PS 155, p.95). That is, we are here witnessing an etiological account of the *appearance* of a dichotomy of thought and being, a dichotomy that is to be dissolved, though not by some kind of intuitive access to the truth or by “running together what thought has put asunder, by supressing the differentiations of the Notion” (PS 7, p.5), rather it will be brought about via the very movement of differentiation, the formal movement of Understanding in explanation, and form and content will collapse into one another.

Indeed, ‘we’ as observers see in the Understanding’s process of explanation just what was missing from its conception of the inner being of things. The inner being of things was constituted by consciousness’s conception of universality that developed throughout A., it was an internally differentiated but *stable* universality, an ‘*inert* realm of laws’, the ‘direct, tranquil image’ of the ‘incessant change’ of the perceived world, and ‘equally present in it’. That is, while equally present in the perceived world, this inner realm failed to encompass all aspects of that world, it left the differentiating *movement* of the incessant change outside of itself in the perceived world. This inner realm was internally differentiated, but as lacking the movement of the differentiation the internally differentiated moments could not be discerned in their determinacy – there seemed to be no intrinsically necessary link between the independent moments of law and their unity, Force. However, in the movement of explanation ‘we’ see the precise movement that was absent from consciousness’s conception. ‘We’ see that in explaining, Understanding apprehends the singular as a universal which is enunciated as law, for example, “(T)he single occurrence of lightning ... is apprehended as a universal, and this universal is enunciated as the *law* of electricity” (PS 154, p.94), and then distinguishes the ground or essential moment, Force, from the law. This distinction or difference though, is then cancelled as Understanding takes sole responsibility for it, this difference is not a difference of the object itself, of content, rather the ground or essence is constituted exactly the same as law, it is merely a formal difference, and these moments have the same content. So,

the law of electricity in its independent moments – positive and negative electricity – is, in truth, no different from its simple essence, Force or *simple* electricity<sup>43</sup>.

That is, in this movement of the Understanding ‘we’ see the full differentiating movement of the incessant change of the perceived world. We witness a movement which (a.) makes a differentiation which is no real differentiation, and (b.) is a differentiation which the movement itself cancels as a differentiation. In such a movement then, what is present “is not merely a bare unity in which *no difference* would be *posited*, but rather a *movement* in which *a distinction is certainly made but*, because it is no distinction is *again cancelled*” (PS 155, p.95). We have here a unity *in* which a differentiating movement is present, but through which the differentiation made is cancelled, as it is no real differentiation – the moments differentiated do not belong to separate sustaining elements, but are internal to a unity.

Now, consciousness as Understanding, insofar as it takes itself to be responsible for the difference of Force and law, takes this movement as its own process of explanation, and not as a movement of the inner world – it takes explanation as its own, merely formal movement, and the oppositions or differences that arise through it as being purely formal. But just such a difference is the difference between the explanation of Understanding and its object as it is in truth, Force, and so this difference too must be merely formal. Force then, in its true content must be constituted the same as the movement of explanation:

“change is not yet a change of the thing itself, but rather presents itself as a pure change by the very fact that the *content* of the moments of change remains the same. But since the *Notion, qua* Notion of the Understanding, is the same as the *inner being* of things, this change becomes for the Understanding the law of the inner world” (PS 156, p.95).

Consequently, the distinction between form and content here collapses – the formal movement of the Understanding in explanation is, in truth, the movement of the content and vice versa.

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<sup>43</sup> This explaining is just then the whole movement of consciousness that ‘we’ have witnessed throughout A. In Sense-certainty we watched consciousness apprehend the singular as universal, as Perception we watched consciousness struggle with the dual characterisations of this universal, the Also and the One, which resulted in consciousness’s conception of internally differentiated universality as law. As Understanding we watched consciousness struggle with dual aspects of its object, Force and law, which resulted in consciousness cancelling this duality, claiming that it maintained the difference or opposition between these aspects.

This collapse then, is also a collapse of the distinction between the sensuous, perceived world and the supersensible world of laws:

“Through this principle, the first supersensible world, the tranquil kingdom of laws, the immediate copy of the perceived world, is changed into its opposite. The law was, in general, like its differences, that which remains selfsame; now, however, it is posited that each of the two worlds is really the opposite of itself. The *selfsame* really repels itself from itself, and what is not selfsame really posits itself as selfsame. In point of fact, it is only when thus determined that the difference is *inner* difference, or the difference *in its own self*” (PS 157, p.96)

So, the sensuous, perceived world is truly as it was considered to be, a *stable*, *selfsame* supersensible world, but this supersensible world is, just as much as the sensuous, perceived world, the *opposite* of itself, i.e. *not* a stable, selfsame supersensible world, but the dynamic, ever-changing sensuous world.

“With this, the inner world is completed as appearance. For the first supersensible world was only the *immediate* raising of the perceived world into the universal element; it had its necessary counterpart in this perceived world which still retained *for itself the principle of change and alteration*. The first kingdom of laws lacked that principle, but obtains it as an inverted world.” (PS 157, pp.96/97).

This ‘kingdom’ has, of course, now obtained that principle and accordingly Understanding has a new conception of the inner world; what Hegel calls a *second supersensible* world or the *inverted world* has arisen for consciousness as Understanding.

Now, ‘we’ are here reminded that this new world is another *supersensible* one, that it resulted from the movement of Understanding in explanation, in fact, it both essentially *is* and is *mediated* by this movement. For us, there is an identity of the explanation of Understanding and the new supersensible inner world, that is, there is the identity of thought and being. Accordingly, ‘we’ then have a new conception of universality as an internally, self-differentiating movement, which involves and essentially is singularity. ‘We’ grasp that the difference between the sensuous, perceived world and the supersensible is an *internal* difference of the new

supersensible world. That is, “the supersensible world, which is the inverted world, has at the same time overarched” the world of appearance “and has it within it; it is *for itself* the inverted world, i.e. the inversion of itself; it is itself and its opposite in one unity (PS 160, p.99). There is, in fact, no difference outside this new world, nothing standing over against it, rather, it is the Absolute, it is the ‘simple abstraction’ or ‘sheer being’ that we started with in Sense-certainty, but now internally filled out with an infinity of difference. Understanding, on the other hand, does not yet share this conception, instead it becomes caught up in the experience of this new supersensible world as an inversion of its first supersensible world.

This second world, as supersensible, is the opposite of the first supersensible world, it is the first world stood on its head, and to see this we need only compare the first world with the second. According to Understanding’s initial conception of the first supersensible world as truth, what appeared as diverse in the sensuous, perceived world was, in truth, not diverse but selfsame. Now, with the second supersensible world as truth, this is turned on its head – what in the sensuous, perceived world is diverse, and therefore in the first supersensible world is selfsame, is now in the inverted world, in truth, not selfsame, diverse. The truth of the sensible, perceived world in the first supersensible world, is here inverted.

“Expressed in determinate moments, this means that what in the law of the first world is sweet, in this inverted in-itself is sour, what in the former is black is, in the other, white ... what in the first law is the oxygen pole of electricity becomes its other, supersensible essence, hydrogen pole; and conversely, what is there the hydrogen pole becomes here the oxygen pole” (PS 158, p.97)

Accordingly, it is tempting to treat the inverted world as *simply being the opposite* of the first world as its truth – what is sweet in one is, in truth or in-itself, sour, etc. – and as such the first supersensible world would simply be the true world as it is for another, or as it appears.

“Looked at superficially, this inverted world is the opposite of the first in the sense that it has the latter outside of it and repels that world from itself as an inverted *actual world*: that one is appearance, but the other the in-itself; that the one is the world as it is for an other, whereas the other is the world as it is for itself” (PS 159, p.97).



But to treat the inverted world in this way, as Hegel reminds us, is just to relapse into the previous position of the Understanding:

“But such antitheses of inner and outer, of appearance and the supersensible, as of two different kind of actuality, we no longer find here. The repelled differences are no longer shared afresh between two substances such as would support them and lend them a separate subsistence: this would result in the Understanding withdrawing from the inner world and relapsing into its previous position” (Ibid., p.98)

That is, Understanding would return to a position in which, on the one hand, there would be the sensuous, perceived world and on the other, as the essence or truth of the perceived world, there would be the inner world. But, if we recall Understanding’s earlier conception of the inner world here, we see that this inner world is thought of as “*just such a sense world* as the first” only “in the imagination” (Ibid.); as the essence of the perceived world it is equally present *in it*, it just “could not be exhibited as a sense-world” (Ibid.). As such, the determinate moments of this inner world are things just as much as those of the perceived world: “sourness which would be the in-itself of the sweet thing is actually a thing just as much as the latter, viz., a *sour thing* ... the oxygen pole which is the in-itself of the hydrogen pole is *actually present* in the same voltaic pile” (Ibid.). In claiming that the in-itself or truth is here just as much a thing as the sweet thing of the sensuous, perceived world, Hegel is referring to the tension or duality present in Understanding’s earlier conception that we saw worked through in the dialectic of Force and law. Law, as the inner being of things was equally present in the perceived world, but it failed to be the “entire presence of appearance” (PS 150, p.91), as a stable unity it proved indifferent to the constant movement of differentiation present in the perceived world. That is to say, Understanding failed to conceive of this equal presence in the appropriate way, and law presented itself as a duality, as Force and law, the dual elements of which lacked any necessary internal connection. This lead to Understanding taking responsibility for the seeming opposition between these elements, i.e. acknowledging their equal essentiality, but in doing so it simply maintained its conception rather than changing it. In arriving at the result that the inner world and the perceived world are equal without an according alteration in its conception, Understanding places the truth over there, in an inner

world, and the appearance of difference over here, in itself. But then its difficulties simply start all over again, the constant movement of differentiation essential to the inner world is not permitted to penetrate into it. That is, Understanding will once again face the dialectical opposition of the inner world and its expression, of Force and law, that it has already passed through and that lead to the inversion of the inner world as truth in its acceptance of responsibility for the difference between these elements.

The point is that it is only the strategy of “fixing the differences in different sustaining elements” (PS 160, p.99), evinced by consciousness throughout A., that is preventing Understanding from arriving at ‘our’ conception of the inverted world as overarching the sensuous, perceived world and being present in it – being simultaneously itself and this other, or put another way, grasping being and thought as a unity. In constantly fixing the differences in different sustaining elements, for example, in taking itself to be responsible for the opposition of Force and law, consciousness as Understanding maintains itself as the merely *formal* movement of explanation which gives rise to the inversion of the inner world as that which is true. This ‘fixing’ then, constitutes a cycle in which Understanding’s truth is constantly inverted: the first supersensible world is inverted, and this inverted world then becomes the truth as opposed to the first supersensible world. But then, this new supersensible world, as the truth, is the *inner* world and *not* the world as it appears or is for another. However, as the essence of the world as it appears, and present through this appearance, this inner is equally present in it, and its determinate moments are things just as much as those present in the world of appearance. That is, the distinction between the two worlds once again collapses. Consciousness comes to discover the distinction between the worlds is no real distinction and the supersensible world, as the truth, inverts once more. In this cycling then, consciousness does indeed find itself in a kind of “witches’ circle in which the determinations of real being and determinations of reflection, ground and grounded, phenomena and phantoms, run riot in indiscriminate company and enjoy equal rank with one another” (SL, p.461).

Consequently, Hegel urges:

“From the idea, then, of inversion, which constitutes the essential nature of one aspect of the supersensible world, we must eliminate the sensuous idea of fixing the differences in a different sustaining element; and this absolute Notion of the

difference must be represented and understood purely as inner difference, a repulsion of the selfsame, as selfsame, from itself, and likeness of the unlike as unlike. We have to think pure change, or *think antithesis within the antithesis itself, or contradiction ...* Only thus is it difference as *inner* difference, or difference *in its own self*, or difference as an *infinity*” (PS 160, pp.98-9).

It is only in thinking ‘pure change’ that the inverted world can be grasped as the ‘absolute Notion’: “the simple essence of life, the soul of the world, the universal blood, whose omnipresence is neither disturbed nor interrupted by any difference, but rather is itself every difference, as also their supersession” (PS 162, p.100). But this direction is aimed at ‘us’ as readers and observers, and as far as the Understanding is concerned the direction will fall on deaf ears. The direction highlights the precise shortcoming in Understanding here, that of ‘fixing the differences in a different sustaining element’, which if not avoided can make the whole process of explanation appear fruitless. That is, it can make the whole process of distinguishing or differentiating ground from grounded, supersensible from sensible, truth from appearance, etc., seem like a mere movement of the Understanding which expresses no other necessity than that of the Understanding, i.e. is purely subjective. This seeming is just what motivated the turn to intuition which, as we saw in section 1, Hegel wishes to reject, and the diagnosis of the problem with the Understanding there matches the shortcoming here. In respect of providing an etiological account then, of the kind of dichotomy, and its source, that motivates the call for a move to intuition, it seems that A. provides such an account.

In failing to grasp its error, consciousness as Understanding does not then set aside its explaining or give it up. While “in the contrary law, as the inversion of the first law, or in the inner difference, it is true that infinity itself becomes the *object* of the Understanding” (PS 164, p.101-2), Understanding consistently “falls short of infinity as such, since it again apportions to two worlds or to two substantial elements, that which is difference in itself” (Ibid., p.102). That is, it merely keeps discovering that the distinctions or differences that it took to be intrinsic to its object are such as to be no real distinctions, i.e. are its own, and the movement itself whereby this came about is to the Understanding “a [mere] happening” (Ibid.).

“the movement *as such* is not the Understanding’s *object*; on the contrary, in this movement the Understanding has as objects positive and negative electricity, distance, force of attraction and a thousand other things which constitute the content of the moments of the movement. The reason why ‘explaining’ affords so much self-satisfaction is just because in it consciousness is, so to speak, communing directly with itself, enjoying only itself; although it seems to be busy with something else, it is in fact occupied only with itself” (PS 163, p.101)<sup>44</sup>.

In consistently ‘fixing the differences in a different sustaining element’, ‘we’ can see that Understanding is consistently giving itself to itself in the form of an other – consistently affording itself the opportunity to discover itself once more in this other<sup>45</sup>. Through this action, however, Understanding maintains this other as “an object in a sensuous covering”, as far as it is concerned, here, “the selfsame and the unlike are *predicates*, whose essence is an inert substrate” (PS 164, p.102).

This is the situation as ‘we’ leave the ‘Force and the Understanding’ chapter behind to consider Understanding as it truly is, i.e. as a Self-Consciousness, in B.. But before we turn to B. we should note that here by the end of A.. being and thought appear to have been, in principle, unified, as per our hypothesis. We have here witnessed a culmination to the first way of unification, and yet at the same time the consciousness observed seems to itself, in its own experience, to be consistently cut off from being. That is, to echo the terms used in the *Encyclopaedia*, it surely seems to it that the universal and determinate are mutually exclusive, that the universal is its own addition and is not to be found present in the empirical, taken in itself.

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<sup>44</sup> C.f. “Along with the formal business of this mode of explanation from grounds, we at the same time hear it repeated – in spite of all the explaining based on well-known forces and matters – that we *do not know* the *inner nature* (*Wesen*) of these forces and matters themselves. This amounts only to a confession that this assigning of grounds is itself completely inadequate; that something quite different from such grounds is required. Only then it is not apparent why this trouble is taken with such explaining, why the something quite different is not sought for, or at least why this mode of explanation is not set aside and the facts left to speak for themselves.” (SL, p.461).

<sup>45</sup> This is the process Hegel referred to in the passage from the *Difference* essay, quoted earlier, “in its striving to enlarge itself into the Absolute, the intellect [*Verstand*] only reproduces itself *ad infinitum* and so mocks itself. Reason [*Vernunft*] reaches the Absolute only in stepping outside of this manifold of parts” (DF pp. 89/90). The ‘fixing’ is a self mocking because it allows Understanding only a negative self-satisfaction, to discover itself only as a falsehood and not as the truth or the Absolute. The Understanding then, does indeed “erect a building ... between man and the Absolute” (Ibid.).

### 3. From Thought to Being

I have made the claim that A. demonstrates the admissibility, in principle, of the first way of unification mentioned in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*. It putatively achieves this by sketching a kind of etiological account of a dichotomy of thought and being, which, very simply put, consists in consciousness misconceiving its object and its relation to its object. I take it that by now I have established, at least a *prima facie* case for this claim through the previous consideration of A. Now, I have further suggested that the first way of unification develops or leads into the second, and that it is in B. that the move is made back from the ‘abstraction of thinking’ to being. It remains to be seen then, if at first sight, this further suggestion also fits Hegel’s text.

In order to see if there is indeed a fit here, we should first consider the characterisation of the new form of consciousness under observation at the opening of B. and whether this new form of consciousness can be said to constitute the new starting point of the ‘abstraction of thinking’. Second, we should consider the general course of the movement of B. to see whether it can be said to encapsulate a movement from such a starting point to being.

Before we turn to these two tasks some general qualifying comments should be made regarding them. Section B., and in particular chapters IV and IVA, of the *Phenomenology* are some of the most discussed, and in some ways, perplexing parts of the text, and they have proved amenable to a number of varying interpretations over the years<sup>46</sup>. The aim here is not to trump or engage in detailed discussion with such interpretations. Rather, in line with the general aims of this first chapter, it is simply the task of assessing whether there is a *prima facie* fit between the text and our hypothesis. In this regard I’ve opted to limit discussion here primarily to the introductory preamble to B. – the sections prior to IVA and IVB. This preamble is a synopsis of the results of A. as well as a preview of the content of what lies ahead in B., and serves primarily to help the reader understand the transition from A. to B., orienting ‘us’ to the new form of consciousness and its object that results from the transition. As such, most of what we need to carry out the prescribed tasks is present here.

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<sup>46</sup> For example, c.f. Kojève 1969, Gadamer 1976 pp.54-74, R. Pippin 1989 pp.131-62, G.A. Kelly 1998, J. McDowell 2003.

At the opening of this preamble then, Hegel characterises the new form of consciousness that we are to encounter by harking back to the course of the previous section: A.

“(I)n the previous modes of certainty what is true for consciousness is something other than itself. But the Notion of this truth vanishes in the experience of it. What the object immediately was *in itself* – mere being in sense-certainty, the concrete thing of perception, and for the Understanding, a Force – proves to be in truth, not this at all; instead, this *in itself* turns out to be a mode in which the object is only for another ... now there has arisen what did not emerge in these previous relationships, viz. a certainty which is identical with its truth; for the certainty is to itself its own object, and consciousness is to itself the truth. In this there is indeed an otherness; that is to say consciousness makes a distinction, but one which at the same time is for consciousness *not* a distinction.” (PS 166, p.104).

Hegel here is drawing out the results of the previous chapter on Force and the Understanding. There ‘we’ arrived at the realisation that consciousness is its own truth, that the movement of consciousness in explanation is precisely what its object consists in. The ‘absolute Notion’, the ‘simple essence of life’, being, is just this movement as a unified whole. In looking to its other as truth, consciousness was really just looking to itself, the distinction between consciousness and its other, as no real distinction, collapsed. In truth then, consciousness is self-consciousness and this was the result of A.

“The *necessary advance* from the previous shapes of consciousness for which their truth was a Thing, an ‘other’ than themselves, expresses just this, that not only is consciousness of a thing possible only for a self-consciousness, but that self-consciousness alone is the truth of those shapes” (PS 164, p.102)

This truth, self-consciousness, is what ‘we’ start with in B.

However, consciousness, as we will recall, did not attain ‘our’ viewpoint in A.. Instead consciousness remained in the cycling action of consistently giving itself to itself in the form of an other by ‘fixing the differences in a different sustaining element’. Its object or other was essentially an inert, unknowable substrate cloaked in

a sensuous covering. ‘We’ have seen self-consciousness show itself to be the truth of consciousness, and yet consciousness as it appears here remains a consciousness of something distinct from itself, which it negates as merely appearance. There is, then, here an antithesis between self-consciousness as the truth, and the appearance of this truth as consciousness. Now, as consciousness is essentially self-consciousness, this antithesis between its appearance and its truth falls within self-consciousness, and the new form of (self) consciousness we are faced with, what we can call *immediate self-consciousness*, is both of these moments – it is constituted by this antithesis.

“otherness is for it in the form of a *being*, or as a *distinct moment*; but there is for consciousness the unity of itself with this difference as a *second distinct moment*. With that first moment, self-consciousness is in the form of consciousness, and the whole expanse of the sensuous world is preserved for it, but at the same time only as connected with the second moment, the unity of self-consciousness with itself; and hence the sensuous world is for it an enduring existence which, however, is only *appearance*, or a difference which, *in itself*, is no difference. This antithesis of its appearance and its truth has, however, for its essence only the truth, viz. the unity of self-consciousness with itself ... Consciousness, as self-consciousness, henceforth has a double object: one is the immediate object, that of sense-certainty and perception, which however *for self-consciousness* has the character of a *negative*; and the second, viz. *itself*, which is the true *essence*, and is present in the first instance only as opposed to the first object.” (PS 167, p.105).

So, immediate self-consciousness as it appears here cannot be explicitly aware of its object as being itself (or, what is the same, of itself as self-consciousness), rather this truth can only be *implicit* in it. After all, its object is the immediate object of sense-certainty and perception as negated, as an abstract, empty beyond: a negative, and its own self is present here only as *opposed* to this object. It is then, rather, the immediate conviction or certainty that the object is itself. Consequently, its self awareness is completely *abstract*. That is to say, this self awareness is completely undifferentiated and indeterminate, self-consciousness is here present simply as an undifferentiated all encompassing ‘I’<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> C.f. PM §424 Z, p.165: “This unity of the ‘I’ and the object which constitutes the principle of mind is, however, at first only *abstractly* present in *immediate* self-consciousness, and is known only by *us* who reflect on it, not as yet by self-consciousness itself. Immediate self-consciousness has not yet for its object the I–I, but only the ‘I’; therefore, it is free only for us, not for itself, is not as yet aware of its

As such an abstract and immediate certainty of itself, this form of (self) consciousness bears resemblance to the starting point of sense-certainty. In sense-certainty

“(C)onsciousness, for its part, is in this certainty only as a pure ‘I’; or I am in it only as a pure ‘This’, and the object similarly only as a pure ‘This’. I, *this* particular I, am certain of *this* particular thing ... here neither I nor the thing has the significance of a complex process of mediation; the ‘I’ does not have the significance of a manifold imagining or thinking; nor does the ‘thing’ signify something that has a host of qualities. On the contrary, the thing *is*, and it *is*, merely because it *is* ... this pure *being*, or this simple immediacy, constitutes its *truth*. Similarly, certainty as a *connection* is an *immediate* pure connection: consciousness is ‘I’, nothing more, a pure ‘This’; the singular consciousness knows a pure ‘This’, or the single item. (PS 91, pp.58-9).

That is, there is an immediate awareness of like by like. ‘This’ by ‘This’, no mediating process is involved, and as a consequence sense-certainty proves completely abstract, devoid of determination. To recall the terminology of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, it appears as the ‘simple abstraction’, “the essential sum of all realities”, “the supremely real essence” (EL §49, p.94), and accordingly, the moment we consider an actual instance of sense-certainty

“(A)mong the countless differences cropping up here we find in every case that the crucial one is that, in sense-certainty, pure being at once splits up into what we have called the two ‘Thises’, one ‘This’ as ‘I’, and the other ‘This’ as object. When *we* reflect on this difference, we find that neither one nor the other is only *immediately* present in sense-certainty, but each is at the same time *mediated*: I have this certainty *through* something else, viz. the thing; and it, similarly, is in sense-certainty *through* something else, viz. through the ‘I’.

It is not just we who make this distinction between essence and instance, between immediacy and mediation; on the contrary, we find it within sense-certainty itself, and it is to be taken up in the form in which it is present there” (PS 92/93, p. 59).

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freedom, and contains only the foundation of it, but not as yet freedom that is truly *actual*”.



Now, in immediate self-consciousness the situation is similar. As an immediate, abstract self-certainty, an all encompassing 'I', it appears as the 'simple abstraction', the 'essential sum of all realities' or 'the supremely real essence'. But here too, there is a distinction present between that self-consciousness's essence, and instances of it. Its essence is simply to be immediate, abstract self awareness, an immediate awareness of like by like: simply 'I', in which there is no distinction or mediation present. But in its instances it is merely consciousness, in which it is faced with a distinct object or the ostensible negation of that object, to which its own essence, as immediate self-consciousness, is opposed.

The key difference from sense-certainty here is that, of course, 'we' have already seen self-consciousness as essence, to be not merely abstract, devoid of differentiation or determination, but to be a self-determining, self-mediating movement, a selfsame unity that consists in the differentiation of itself from itself and the cancellation of this differentiation. That is, 'we' are here already aware that the abstract self-consciousness constituting the essence of immediate self-consciousness is not, truly speaking, self-consciousness – the 'absolute notion', or 'supremely real essence'. 'We' have seen this true essence through, and in fact as, the movement of consciousness in A., but consciousness did not accept this movement as the true or supremely real essence, rather the movement was simply its own and therefore not a real movement, only one which contained false distinction, and so, for consciousness, the real essence stood opposed to this movement as an inert substrate. This substrate, as in truth just the movement exhibited by consciousness, and as the real essence, *is self-consciousness*. Therefore, in cancelling or negating the movement as the true essence, determining it as an inert substrate, 'we' can see that consciousness sets itself in opposition to its truth, determining this truth falsely as an inert or static, abstract substrate, hence the presence of immediate self-consciousness, as the antithesis of self-consciousness falsely construed as abstract and static, with consciousness.

So, from the outset here we can see that our new starting point, the abstract self-consciousness of immediate self-consciousness, is merely the 'abstraction of thinking', and that what it lacks – the self-differentiating movement – remains in its opposed element, viz. consciousness. In fact, we can see that the 'simple abstraction' mentioned in the *Encyclopaedia*, that which is all inclusive and representative of 'the essential sum of all realities' or 'the supremely real essence', is equally, merely the abstraction of thinking and completely inadequate to represent the truth of the matter.

As a notion or concept it is inadequate to the subject it represents. The point of inadequacy here is the same as that found throughout A., viz. the movement of differentiation or determination, what could be called the moment of negation, is not permitted to fall within that which constitutes the essence, and this is the same whether we take the essence to be sensuous and empirical, or thought.

From this we can see that implicit in Hegel's characterisation of immediate self-consciousness and the transition from A. to B. as a whole, is a criticism of the general approach of many of his post-Kantian contemporaries and of Kant himself<sup>48</sup>. For the abstract self-consciousness of immediate self-consciousness bears close resemblance to the formal unity of Kant's apperceiving transcendental ego. The abstract self-consciousness here is not the empirical self of introspection – the object of immediate self-consciousness does not simply present itself explicitly as being itself – and this abstract self-consciousness also stands opposed to the nominal negation of the immediate object of Sense-certainty and Perception, i.e. to the inert, indeterminate substrate taken by consciousness as Understanding to be the *truth of its object*. Rather, such a substrate is *not* the truth of something distinct from consciousness, but is simply itself, 'I', or the abstract self-consciousness of immediate self-consciousness. Further, one might even say that this abstract self-consciousness, while being taken to be the essence or ground of the objective consciousness, here also only appears through or in objective consciousness's determination of its object, i.e. through or in A. We have seen though, via A., that such a construal of self-consciousness is inaccurate and based on the erroneous practice of refusing to let the 'moment of negation', the movement of determination, fall within the essence of things, and that it is because of this inaccuracy that such self-consciousness appears merely as the abstraction of thinking or as purely subjective<sup>49</sup>. Put another way, if such self-consciousness is taken as a principle of subject-object identity, then

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<sup>48</sup> Hegel names no names here, though he certainly makes it clear that he, at least, has Fichte in mind by invoking Fichte's formulation of the first principle of his system – I am I – in the characterisation of immediate self-consciousness. See PS 167, p.105.

<sup>49</sup> As I have mentioned the criticism here is only implicit. Hegel holds off making direct reference to Kant and apperception until C.(AA.). The reason being that immediate self-consciousness only possesses such abstract self-awareness implicitly, whereas in the Kantian system such self-awareness is explicitly worked out as the ground for the unity of the object. The criticism there, however, is much the same as here – it is the abstractness that causes difficulty, and results in the requirement of "an extraneous impulse, in which first is to be found the *multiplicity* of sensations and ideas" (PS 238, p.144) as essential, which is opposed to the unity of apperception that was asserted to be essential. "This idealism is involved in this contradiction because it asserts the *abstract Notion* of Reason to be the True" (PS 239, p.145).

precisely because it lacks the relevant movement in and through which the identity is constituted, it will fail as an accurate principle and will appear merely as an abstraction of thought, or a subjective, purely extrinsic approximation of the truth of the matter. So, Hegel would not only claim that Kant failed to accurately represent the truth about the ground of the unity of objects, by grounding them in the formal unity of the transcendental ego, but also that any system which bases itself on such an abstract formal unity, e.g. that of Fichte, will appear subjective at base. We have grasped that this kind of abstract self-consciousness is not truly self-consciousness, and although in immediate self-consciousness we face the antithesis of self-consciousness as this abstract essence, with itself as consciousness, Hegel claims that “(I)n this sphere self-consciousness exhibits itself as the movement in which this antithesis is removed, and the identity of itself with itself becomes explicit for it” (PS 167, p.105)<sup>50</sup>.

We should now turn our attention to this movement itself and the way in which it is said to remove the antithesis, in order to see if it would represent a movement from the abstraction of thinking to being. A concise outline of this movement is given by Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Mind*, the third part of his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*.

“The contradiction here outlined must be resolved, and the way in which this happens is that self-consciousness which has itself as consciousness, as ‘I’, for object, goes on to develop the simple identity of the ‘I’ into a real difference, and thus by superseding its one-sided subjectivity gives itself objectivity; this process is identical with its converse, by which the object is at the same time given a subjective determination by the ‘I’, is immersed in the inwardness of the self, and in this way the dependence of the ‘I’ on an external reality which is a feature of consciousness is destroyed. Self-consciousness thus reaches a stage where it does not have consciousness *alongside* it, is not externally connected with it, but truly pervades it and contains it dissolved within it.” (PM §425, Z, p.166).

And, also, in §425 proper, Hegel says of immediate self-consciousness that,

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<sup>50</sup> Certainly then, for Hegel, an appeal to some kind of intuition of the truth is uncalled for and would, in any case, be ineffectual. Basically, such an appeal would involve committing the the same kind of error counceled against by Hegel: to treat the truth as immediate and abstract.

“as this certitude of self against the object it is the *impulse* to realise its implicit nature, by giving its abstract self-awareness content and objectivity, and in the other direction to free itself from its sensuousness, to set aside the given objectivity and to identify it with itself. The two processes are one and the same, the identification of consciousness and self-consciousness” (PM §425, pp.165-6).

This is what we get in section B. of the *Phenomenology*: immediate self-consciousness develops the ‘simple identity’ of the ‘I’ into a ‘real difference’, i.e. the differentiating movement, the moment of negation, falls within the ‘I’ and the difference of itself from itself, necessary for self-consciousness, ceases to be *no* real difference, instead it becomes a difference which possesses being or is actual. In so doing immediate self-consciousness overturns its negative, oppositional relation to the immediate object of Sense-certainty and Perception that it has as consciousness. As the truth of consciousness it is no longer simply an indeterminate, abstract substrate and does not merely find itself *as such a substrate*, rather it ‘gives itself objectivity’ and comes to find itself in the immediate object of Sense-certainty and Perception, not simply as beyond or opposed to it. Consequently, via this process of development, immediate self-consciousness ceases to be merely abstract and becomes true self-consciousness. That is, it ceases to be the mere abstraction of thinking and becomes the supremely real essence, or the absolute Notion as ‘we’ have seen it. Therefore, though we have not yet seen just how this process is to achieve this transformation of immediate self-consciousness into true self-consciousness, it is plain that as such a transformation, the process is a movement from the abstraction of thinking to being.

Now, as we can already see from Hegel’s statements concerning B. in the preamble and in the *Phenomenology of Mind*, that the course of B. is to follow the second way admissible for the unification of thought and being, I feel it unnecessary to follow every development and transition of this movement here. A brief explanation of how the movement is to achieve its end, however, should be given. Hegel provides a schematic explanation of this in terms of *desire* or *appetite* (*Begierde*) and *recognition*.

Immediate self-consciousness, in accordance with its implicit nature as simply ‘I’, is the impulse to overcome the opposition of its object. Such self-consciousness, in being certain of itself as the truth or essence of the object, is certain of the untruth of the opposition or independence of its object. Such independence or opposition – the

difference of the object from itself – is truly mere appearance, or no real difference. However, this certainty of itself as being the truth of the object, is only *implicit* here, that is, immediate self-consciousness is not aware that it is essentially this certainty – it is only aware of itself in opposition to its object, as a singular thing opposed to another singular thing, and as such, this certainty receives no determination in thought. It is, rather, immediate and abstract – *an impulse*. As Hegel puts it, “self-consciousness is *Desire* in general (*Begierde überhaupt*)” (PS 167, p.105)<sup>51</sup>.

Desire, or this impulse, is the impulse to overcome the independence of immediate self-consciousness’s object by *destroying* it, and via the satisfaction of this impulse immediate self-consciousness makes its abstract, self-certainty explicit for itself. In the destruction of the object it is affirmed that the object is truly nothing, not real and independent of immediate self-consciousness, nothing over against it.

“Certain of the nothingness of this other, it explicitly affirms that this nothingness is *for it* the truth of the other; it destroys the independent object and thereby gives itself the certainty of itself as a *true* certainty, a certainty which has become explicit for self-consciousness itself *in an objective manner*.” (PS 174, p109).

It is important to understand why the desire here is a desire to destroy (*vernichtet*) the object, for one might be tempted to think that mere possession or physical manipulation of the object would suffice to overcome its independence. Immediate self-consciousness can only satisfy itself in the destruction of its object because the self-awareness constituting its essence is abstract and immediate. It is an undifferentiated ‘I’, there can be no other distinction but ‘I’, and so to realise its essence, to give itself to itself as this undifferentiated, pure ‘I’, all other opposing determination must be nullified – the object must perish. Of course, in pursuing the satisfaction of its desire, immediate self-consciousness may take possession of or

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. “appetite (*Begierde*) is that form in which self-consciousness appears on the first stage of its development ... appetite has as yet no further determination than that of impulse – so far as this is not determined by thought – directed towards external object in which it seeks to satisfy itself ... the necessity for the appetite so determined to exist in self-consciousness, lies in the fact that self-consciousness ... is also its immediately antecedent stage, namely, consciousness, and is aware of this internal contradiction. Where a self-identical something bears within it a contradiction and is charged with the feeling of its intrinsic self-identity as well as with the opposite feeling of its internal contradiction, there necessarily emerges the impulse to remove this contradiction” (PM §426, Z, P.167).

physically manipulate its object, but this will not suffice to satiate the desire, nothing short of destruction will<sup>52</sup>.

The problem for immediate self-consciousness here is that the independence of the object is a necessary condition for the satisfaction of desire and hence of its self-identity. That is, the independence of the object is a necessary condition of immediate self-consciousness.

“Desire and the self-certainty obtained in its gratification, are conditioned by the object, for self-certainty comes from superseding this other: in order that this supersession can take place, there must be this other. Thus self-consciousness, by its negative relation to the object, is unable to supersede it; it is really because of that relation that it produces the object again and the desire as well.” (PS 175, p.109)

Immediate self-consciousness might destroy or consume a particular object, but the satisfaction thereby gained is fleeting and it must continue in its destruction and consumption in order to maintain its self-identity, its individuality.

In fact, in a sense, immediate self-consciousness never really succeeds in completely overcoming the independence of its object, as Hegel points out, self-consciousness ‘by its negative relation to the object is unable to supersede it’, rather it consistently produces the object and the desire all over again. It may seem strange here to say that “it”, i.e. self-consciousness, produces the object again, but this claim refers to the fact that consciousness, which is confronted by an independent object as its truth or essence, is an essential component of self-consciousness, one that the abstract essence of immediate self-consciousness, as simply ‘I’, fails to include. That is, as essentially just ‘I’, immediate self-consciousness is opposed to consciousness. But it is only through consciousness taking its essence or truth to be an independent object that immediate self-consciousness becomes *actual*. Immediate self-consciousness only attains self-certainty, only explicitly becomes a self-consciousness or actualises itself as such, through the destruction of the independent object. So the action of consciousness as Understanding in ‘fixing the differences in different

<sup>52</sup> Elsewhere in the preamble Hegel uses other terms such as “*Aufzehren*”—usually rendered ‘to consume’ or ‘to exhaust’—in similar connections (see *Werke 3.*, p. 141). Such terms are often taken literally and I do not wish to preclude any literal sense to Hegel’s use of them, or that such activities would satisfy desire, by here focussing on destruction as the only activity that will satisfy desire. It is clear that ‘to consume’ or ‘to exhaust’ an object, is equally to destroy it in the required sense of reducing it to nothing.

sustaining elements' which maintained the independence of its object as essence or truth is, in fact, an essential feature or function of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness, in truth, *produces* the independent object for itself in this way<sup>53</sup>.

Accordingly, through its merely fleeting satisfaction in the destruction of its object, immediate self-consciousness becomes "aware that the object has its own independence" (PS 175, p.109). Now, externally, or as immediate self-consciousness appears, this makes no difference: "it is no less absolutely *for itself*, and it is so only by superseding the object; and it must experience its satisfaction, for it is the truth" (Ibid.). But implicitly or internally, immediate self-consciousness is changed. The self-awareness or self-satisfaction it experiences – its self-identity – is not, in truth, an abstract, immediate one, but instead necessarily involves the independent object, it comes only through an independent other which is identified with itself. So, while the desire remains unaltered, the implicit self-awareness, far from being merely abstract, is conditioned by the independent object. True self-consciousness will out, so to speak.

"the sense of self which the ego gets in the satisfaction does not remain in abstract self-concentration or in mere individuality; on the contrary – as negation of *immediacy* and individuality the result involves a character of universality and of the identity of self-consciousness with its object" (PM §429, p.170)

Now, insofar as the independent object is produced *by* self-consciousness, self-consciousness *negates its own immediacy*. This is essentially true self-consciousness, in which we have the movement of differentiation and subsequent cancellation which was absent from the object in Understanding and absent from the abstract self-awareness of immediate self-consciousness.

But this truth is here still implicit, and the desire remains. Therefore, it seems that satisfaction of the desire will only be forthcoming if *the object* displays itself as internally self-negating. That is, self-consciousness will only come to recognise its truth, will only achieve explicit self-awareness in another self-consciousness.

"A self-consciousness exists *for a self-consciousness*. Only so is it in fact self-consciousness; for only in this way does the unity of itself in its otherness

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<sup>53</sup> In regard to the separation of thought from being that Hegel brings out through A., we can see that this is in fact a necessary movement in the unification of thought and being.

become explicit for it. The 'I' which is the object of its Notion is in fact not 'object'; the object of Desire, however, is only independent, for it is the universal indestructible substance, the fluid self-identical essence. A self-consciousness, in being an object, is just as much 'I' as 'object'. With this, we already have before us the Notion of *Spirit (Geist)*. What still lies ahead for consciousness is the experience of what Spirit is- this absolute substance which is the unity of the different independent self-consciousness's which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: 'I' that is 'We' and 'We' that is 'I'." (PS 177, p.110)

The development of this explicit and true self-consciousness which is only through an other independent self-consciousness is traced through B.. Such self-consciousness involves a structure of mutual recognition, in which individual self-consciousnesses come to recognise its object as a self-consciousness and be recognised by it as such. In fact, it is only as such a structure of mutual recognition that it is true self-consciousness.

Strictly speaking, the details of the development need not concern us here. We have already seen that in this development the abstract self-consciousness we started with, the simple 'I' or 'abstraction of thinking' develops itself into an independent object for itself, an object which is just as much 'I' as object. That is, the summary of what went before in A. and the preview of what is to come in B. provided by Hegel in his preamble to B., seems to fit the hypothesis that B. accords to the second way admissible for the unification of thought and being. Nevertheless, for the sake of clarity it is worth providing a cursory account of some of the major steps in the development.

The steps I am concerned with are traced in 'B. (a.) Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage'<sup>54</sup>. The first is what has come to be called 'the life and death struggle' and the second 'the master slave dialectic', though strictly both constitute a single subsection of Hegel's text. Hegel is clear about his intent in this subsection: "(W)e have now to see how the process of this pure Notion of recognition, of the duplicating of self-consciousness in its oneness, appears to self-consciousness" (PS §185, p.112). So, we are to begin to see the realisation of true self-consciousness from immediate self-consciousness.

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<sup>54</sup>PS §'s 178-96, pp. 111-9.



We start in the life and death struggle, then, with immediate self-consciousness:

“Self-consciousness is, to begin with, simple being-for-self, self-equal through the exclusion from itself of everything else ... What is 'other' for it is an unessential, negatively characterised object. But the 'other' is also a self-consciousness; one individual is confronted by another individual. Appearing thus immediately on the scene, they are for one another like ordinary objects, *independent* shapes ... they have not as yet exposed themselves to each other in the form of pure being-for-self, or as self-consciousnesses” (PS §186, p.113).

We will recall, such immediate self-consciousness is desire in general, or as Hegel re-phrases matters here: it “consists in showing itself as the pure negation of its objective mode, or in showing that it is not attached to any specific *existence*” (PS §187, p.113). Its self-certainty is only realised in destroying what is other than it. Now, as here there are two such individual self-consciousnesses their action as desire is twofold. First, insofar as they act toward the other, they attempt to destroy the other: “each seeks the death of the other” (Ibid.). Second, insofar as each seeks to destroy the other, each risks destruction by the other; the first action involves the staking of life. Thus a life and death struggle ensues. It is only through such a struggle that immediate self-consciousness can realise its self-certainty and prove to itself that how it immediately appears – as an opposed other – is not essentially how it is (Ibid., p.114).

The problem is, of course, that such a struggle forecloses the possibility of recognition. Throughout, the other is treated as an ordinary object, and just as with desire the destruction of the object puts an end to the self-certainty gained through it, so too the death of the other “does away with the truth that was supposed to issue from it, ... with the certainty of self generally” (PS §188, p.114).

Through the experience of such hollow victories it is learned that “life is as essential” to self-consciousness “as pure self-consciousness” (PS §189, p.115). Once an individual self-consciousness grasps this the life and death struggle need no longer occur. Instead, this individual, in refusing to stake his life, confirms to the other that he is not an independent self-consciousness<sup>55</sup>. That is, this individual shows the other that he is not independent by being completely subservient to the desire and will of

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<sup>55</sup>Cf.: “The individual who has not risked his life may well be recognised as a *person*, but he has not attained to the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness” (PS §187, p.114).

the other. In the place of a life and death struggle a relationship of bondsman to lord or slave to master develops.

In such a relationship it at first appears as if the lord realises a stable self-certainty, overcoming the independence of things, via the bondsman who is not independent and whom the lord sets to work on the independent things in the service of his desire:

“What desire failed to achieve, he succeeds in doing, viz. to have done with the thing altogether, and to achieve satisfaction in the enjoyment of it. Desire failed to do this because of the thing's independence; but the lord, who has interposed the bondsman between it and himself, takes to himself only the dependent aspect of the thing and has the pure enjoyment of it. The aspect of its independence he leaves to the bondsman, who works on it” (PS §190, p.116).

However, the bondsman, by not being independent from the lord, is not an independent self-consciousness in the eyes of the lord, but rather a dependent one reliant upon the lord. Therefore, the lord's own self-certainty depends upon something other than an independent self-consciousness; it cannot be a pure *self*-certainty, but is mediated by something other and as such undermines the lord's self-certainty. In other words, there is only one-sided recognition present here. The lord is recognised by the bondsman as an independent self-consciousness while the bondsman is not so recognised by the lord, and accordingly the recognition achieved by the lord cannot be maintained.

Contrary to first impressions, Hegel argues, the situation of the bondsman is more promising as far as the realisation of true self-consciousness is concerned. The bondsman entered servitude out of fear of death – he realised that life is essential to self-consciousness and dared not stake his own. This fear continues in servitude where the lord represents the absolute power. Yet in relinquishing himself to the lord, in grasping the essentiality of life to self-consciousness, the bondsman has a less immediate relation to natural existence than the lord. Through his service for the lord “he rids himself of his attachment to natural existence in every single detail” (PS §194, p.117), he gives up his own desires and is no longer driven by them or dependent upon them. Moreover, in being set to work on things for the lord, the bondsman cannot simply destroy, consume or otherwise exhaust these things, but

must instead work on them while letting them remain in existence. In such work the bondsman employs his own creativity, objectifying it in the new form and shape imparted to the things he works on. The result is that the bondsman comes to identify and recognise his own independence in those things: “(I)t is in this way ... that consciousness, *qua* worker, comes to see in the independent being [of the object] its *own* independence” (PS §195, p.118).

The bondsman then realises a form of independent self-consciousness that is very different from the lord. He realises a self-consciousness *through* otherness, one that is not opposed to the independent existences around it, but which understands them as essentially its own independence: itself. We can therefore see in the development of the bondsman, in his fear, service and work, a result which “involves a character of universality and of the identity of self-consciousness with its object” (PM §429, p.170, cf. p.69 below). The bondsman has discovered that he possesses 'universal formative power' (PS §196, p.119), that the world is not simply independent from and opposed to himself, or *beyond thought*, but that it is open to his ideas, capable of being shaped. That is, we can see that through B. there is a movement from the 'abstraction of thinking', as immediate self-consciousness, to a realisation of its identity with being, as the determinate existences it initially finds itself confronted with, and we thus find here:

“self-consciousness in a new shape, a consciousness which ... is aware of itself as essential being, a being which *thinks* or is a free self-consciousness. For *to think* does not mean to be an *abstract* 'I', but an 'I' which has at the same time the significance of *intrinsic being*, of having itself for object, or of relating itself to objective being in such a way that its significance is the *being-for-self* of the consciousness for which it is [an object]” (PS §197, p.120)

The remaining subsections of B. (some of which will be addressed in the next chapter) essentially serve to show the development of this new shape, which in its immediate form is only the abstract principle belonging to stoicism that “consciousness is a being that *thinks*, and that consciousness holds something to be essentially important, or true and good only insofar as it *thinks* it to be such” (PS §198, p.121). As we will see (chapter 2: 3. Scepticism as a Form of Consciousness) this principle proves too abstract, and stoicism is unable to fully realise the identity of

thought and the determinate individuality of the world, rather it remains altogether indifferent to individuality.

#### 4. Reason and Critical philosophy

We can see then, that by section C.(AA.), where for the first time consciousness becomes Reason and “its thinking is itself directly actuality, and thus its relationship to the latter is that of idealism” (PS 232, p.139), there is a certain point of completion to this process. Here consciousness is once more returned to the formula of ‘I am I’ though now

“the ‘I’ that is object for me, is not merely an *empty* object in general, as it is for self-consciousness as such ... on the contrary it is for self-consciousness an object such that any other object whatever is a *non-being*. But self-consciousness is all reality, not merely *for itself* but also *in itself* only through *becoming* this reality, or rather through *demonstrating* itself to be such. It demonstrates itself to be this *along the path* in which first, in the dialectical movement of ‘meaning’, perceiving and understanding, otherness as an *intrinsic being* vanishes. Then, in the movement through the independence of consciousness in lordship and bondage, through the conception of freedom, through the liberation that comes from Scepticism and the struggle for absolute liberation by the consciousness divided against itself, otherness in so far as it is only *for consciousness*, vanishes for *consciousness itself*. There appeared two aspects, one after the other: one in which the essence or the True had for consciousness the determinateness of *being*, the other in which it had the determinateness of being only *for consciousness*. But the two reduced themselves to a single truth, viz. that what *is*, or the in-itself, only *is* in so far as it is *for* consciousness, and what is *for* consciousness is also *in itself* or has *intrinsic* being.” (PS 233, pp.140/141).

This all fits the suggestion that Hegel demonstrates the two ways admissible for unification mentioned in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, in the opening transitions of the *Phenomenology* from A. to C.(AA.).

Our next task will be to consider how Hegel's reaction to Critical Philosophy is affected by his interpretation of scepticism through a discussion of Hegel's identification of Critical philosophy with a positive expression of scepticism. But first we will do well to say a few more preparatory words about the connection of the putative demonstration of the *Phenomenology* to the initial problem and the connection of this problem to the Critical philosophy of Kant and others.

If we cast our minds back to the preface of the *Phenomenology* and the loss which motivated the 'prevalent view' of truth as intuition described there, we will recall that the demand for a recovery of the lost truth via intuition was placed, by Hegel, in the context of the stage that self-conscious spirit had currently reached. Hegel notes there that:

"it is clear that Spirit has now got beyond the substantial life it formerly lead in the element of thought ... It has not only gone beyond all this into the other extreme of an insubstantial reflection of itself into itself but beyond that too" (*Ibid.*)

This locates the demand for the recovery of what has been lost as issuing from a point after this 'insubstantial reflection' has occurred. Now, both the 'substantial life' (in the element of thought) and the 'insubstantial reflection' (of itself into itself) can be recognisably identified with the positions of the consciousness observed in A. and B. – in A. consciousness in its emergence attempted to grasp being in thought and had not yet lost its sense of solid and substantial being, the oppositions always being between what is singularised and universal, whereas by B. consciousness found only itself in its immediate object and being as the truth or essence was an inert unknowable substrate – a beyond. 'We' grasped this substrate as simply a determination of consciousness – 'we' grasped consciousness as, in truth, self-consciousness. As immediate self-consciousness however, this self-consciousness was an insubstantial reflection of itself into itself, for it only had itself as truth in the form of an empty, inert substrate, in the form of the simple abstraction of thinking.

Given this identification and the point of completion reached by C.(AA.), we may well ask what it is that prompts the demand for a recovery at this point. Hegel has shown the incorrectness of the misapprehensions of various forms of consciousness up to this point, and we could certainly understand the demand for a recovery issuing

from a consciousness that finds itself in the position of that form of consciousness at the opening of B., but why would the demand issue from a point at which this recovery has, in principle, been completed?

The answer to this is straightforwardly presented in Hegel's description of the dialectical method in the 'Introduction' to the *Phenomenology* and it is the same as we witnessed in the transition from A. to B.: the movement of the dialectic goes on behind the back of consciousness, so to speak, and consciousness does not comprehend that whereby its new object originated. That is to say, a new form of consciousness always comes on the scene immediately, for example, in B. consciousness initially appeared as 'immediate self-consciousness', not aware of the course of A. through which it became what it is - not explicitly aware of its implicit essence or truth<sup>56</sup>. It is no surprise then, that at the opening of C.(AA.) we find only immediate Reason, not aware of its own true provenance:

"The consciousness which is this truth has this path behind it and has forgotten it, and comes on the scene *immediately* as Reason; in other words, this Reason which comes immediately on the scene appears only as the *certainty*. Thus it merely asserts that it is all reality, but does not itself comprehend this; for it is along that forgotten path that this immediately expressed assertion is comprehended. And equally anyone who has not trodden this path finds this assertion incomprehensible when he hears it in this pure form ... The idealism that does not demonstrate that path but starts off with this assertion is therefore, too, pure *assertion* which does not comprehend its own self" (PS 233/234, p. 141).

My purpose, however, in posing this question of 'why a demand for recovery at this point?' was to highlight a sense in which the progression through the ways admissible for unification must, in principle, be complete, that is, a sense in which they have been shown to be admissible before the demand for recovery can be made. The paths traced by A. and B. constitute a pre-requisite to the idealism which is the first, immediate appearance of Reason. It is through the separation of thought from

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<sup>56</sup> In fact, as such it was Desire, which can itself be considered as a kind of demand for a recovery of what has been lost, albeit a transient one. Obviously, the demand here is only in the form of an impulse to destroy its independent other. In the form of immediate self-consciousness, self-consciousness is not yet explicitly aware of the essentiality of the independent object to its truth and as such it only experiences the loss of its truth, the loss of its self-satisfaction, in the independence of this object. The demand, as Desire, only arises in the independence of its object.

being in the development of consciousness as Understanding, that self-consciousness, as in truth ‘the supremely real essence’, comes to realise itself. This realisation of itself in B. involves its separation from itself as a distinct opposed element. Only as such does consciousness become Reason, the first immediate appearance of which is the idealism mentioned above. This idealism which, as we will see, is to be identified with Critical philosophy, is presumably the general point which motivates the ‘prevalent view’s’ demand in the preface for a recovery via intuition.

This throws light on the comments that Hegel makes regarding this idealism in C.(AA.). This idealism, he says, is “pure *assertion* which does not comprehend its own self” (PS 234, p.141) because it is ignorant of its own provenance, of that movement by which it came to be. Such idealism starts from the unity of apperception but *fails to correctly derive or demonstrate* this unity and as a result the “I am I” that it asserts fails to be truly absolute. For Hegel, “self-consciousness is all reality ... only through *becoming* this reality, or rather through *demonstrating* itself to be such” (PS 233, p.140), but this idealism has ‘forgotten’ this path by which self-consciousness became or demonstrated itself to be all reality. Instead of being absolute then, the immediate certainty of “I am I” retains an opposition. As Hegel notes, this idealism:

“claims an *immediate certainty* which is confronted by other immediate certainties, which have, however, been lost on that same path. With equal right, therefore, the assertions of these certainties, too, take their place alongside the assertion of that certainty. Reason appeals to the *self-consciousness* of each and every consciousness: ‘*I am I*, my object and my essence is *I*’; and no one will deny Reason this truth. But in basing itself on this appeal Reason sanctions the truth of this other certainty, viz. that there is for me an ‘other’; that an other than ‘I’ is object and essence for me, or, in that I am object and essence to myself. I am only so by drawing back from the ‘other’ altogether, and taking my place as an actuality *alongside* it. Not until Reason comes on the scene as a *reflection* from this opposite certainty does its affirmation about itself present itself not merely as a certainty and an assertion, but as a truth; and not merely alongside other truths but as the sole truth. Its *immediate appearance* on the scene is the abstraction of its *actual presence*, the essence and the *in-itself* of which is the absolute Notion, i.e. *the movement which has brought it into being.*” (PS 234, p.141).

This idealism therefore, Hegel claims, fails to escape the sensuous, empirical world of ‘meaning’, ‘perceiving’ and the Understanding (i.e. of A.) as an essential, extraneous *other*. It *asserts* ‘I am I’, that all things are sensations or ideas, but it fails to properly demonstrate this and hence its assertion remains without substantive content. Instead it requires an “extraneous impulse, in which first is to be found the *multiplicity* of sensations and ideas” (PS 238, p144) in order to fill out its empty assertion with content. The result is that:

“It is involved in a direct contradiction; it asserts essence to be a duality of opposed factors, the *unity of apperception* and equally a *Thing*; whether the Thing is called an extraneous impulse (*Anstoß*), or an empirical or sensuous entity, or the Thing-in-itself (*Ding an sich*), it still remains in principle the same, i.e. extraneous to that unity” (PS 238, p.145)

It is obvious from these comments that this type of idealism is to be identified with that of the Critical Philosophy of Hegel’s own time, that of Kant and Fichte, and whether we are considering a Kantian ‘*Ding an sich*’ or Fichte’s ‘*Anstoß*’, for Hegel, this other essential element or other thing remains empty of content and stands in opposition to the assertion of the truth of the unity of apperception. Here then, in Critical philosophy, in spite of being explicitly certain of itself as truth, in *asserting* ‘I am I’, we have a position which, for Hegel, still commits the error of ‘fixing the differences in a different sustaining element’ because it fails to be sufficiently aware of its grounds. One might say that in Hegel’s view, Critical philosophy fails to be sufficiently critical, it fails to properly demonstrate its ground, or that it takes some grounding element for granted.

Naturally, more must be said about Hegel’s criticisms of Critical philosophy and particularly of its putative failure to properly demonstrate its grounds. However, we have not yet considered the effect of Hegel’s interpretation of scepticism upon his reaction to Critical philosophy and the impact this has on his thought concerning the two ways putatively traced in the opening transitions of the *Phenomenology*. It is in this interpretation of scepticism that we find the seed of the criticism of Critical philosophy outlined here, and of Hegel’s own belief that the two ways are admissible. So, it is towards Hegel’s interpretation of scepticism that we will now turn our attention, and in particular to his identification of Critical philosophy as “the same



kind of self-contradictory ambiguity as Scepticism” (PS 238, p.144) (albeit in the mode of a positive expression of this ‘ambiguity’) in section C.(AA.).

## **Chapter Two: Scepticism**

Hegel's identification of Kantian idealism or the Critical philosophy in general, with a form of scepticism undoubtedly occurred, in his own mind, well before the publication of the *Phenomenology*. In amongst the twelve theses that were presented in advance of his 1801 *Philosophical Dissertation on the Orbits of the Planets*<sup>57</sup> as part of the requirements to qualify for lecturing at the University of Jena, we find the following thesis: "7. Critical Philosophy lacks ideas; it is an imperfect form of Scepticism"<sup>58</sup>. Leaving aside, for the moment, the difference between this identification and that found in the *Phenomenology*, we can see that this shows Hegel to have been concerned with the relation between scepticism and Critical philosophy at that time. Such concern was of a piece with Hegel's interest in the issues surrounding the idea of providing the correct systematic form for philosophy raised in the works of Post-Kantian idealists such as Reinhold and Fichte. Indeed, shortly before arriving in Jena, Hegel expressed a desire to find a systematic form for his own thought in a letter dated November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1800 to his friend Schelling<sup>59</sup> – who was also present at the examination in which Hegel defended his 'twelve theses'.

It is fair to say that concerns surrounding the issues of systematicity and first principles in philosophy were dominant themes in the Post-Kantian scene. One of the major catalysts to the philosophical investigation of such themes was G. E. Schulze's anonymously published treatise *Aenesidemus* (1792)<sup>60</sup> which pitched the new Critical philosophy, inaugurated by Kant and putatively advanced by Reinhold, against a detailed sceptical attack. The work prompted Fichte to re-assess his own thought regarding Kant's Transcendental philosophy<sup>61</sup> and Reinhold's re-interpretation of it, finally leading him to offer an initial outline of his new standpoint in a review article

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<sup>57</sup> For a full translation by Pierre Adler see J. Stewart (Ed.) 2002, pp. 173-207.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* p. 172. The sixth thesis reads: "The idea is synthesis of the infinite and the finite, and the whole of Philosophy consists in ideas [*est in ideis*]" (p. 171).

<sup>59</sup> See H. S. Harris 'Hegel's intellectual development to 1807' in F. Beiser (Ed.) 1993, p.35.

<sup>60</sup> The full title is *Aenesidemus, or concerning the Foundations of the Elementary Philosophy Propounded in Jena by Professor Reinhold, including a Defence of Scepticism against the Pretensions of the Critique of Reason*, an excerpt of which is translated in George di Giovanni & H. S. Harris (trans. & eds.) 2000, pp.104-35.

<sup>61</sup> "[*Aenesidemus*] has overthrown Reinhold in my eyes, has made me suspicious of Kant, and has overturned my whole system from the ground up. One cannot live under the open sky. It cannot be helped; the system must be rebuilt." This is an excerpt taken from Fichte's letter to H. Stephani of mid-December 1793- as used in D. Breazeale 1988, p.56.

of *Aenesidemus* in February 1794<sup>62</sup>, and a more developed position in his important ‘critique’, published in May of the same year: *Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre* (*Concerning the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre*)<sup>63</sup>. This re-assessment of the Critical philosophy in light of such scepticism firmly established the relation between scepticism and questions regarding first principles and the systematic form of philosophy, as a philosophical topic of key importance<sup>64</sup>.

It’s no surprise then that we find Hegel espousing an opinion on this relation as early as 1801, and giving it a much fuller treatment, specifically with regard to Schulze’s later, more comprehensive sceptical work *Critique of Theoretical Philosophy*, in 1802 in his *Verhaeltnis des Skeptizismus zur Philosophie* (*The Relation of Scepticism to Philosophy*)<sup>65</sup>. This essay, more than any other, provides us with insight into the formulation of Hegel’s, perhaps somewhat unorthodox, views regarding scepticism at that time, which would – after the end of his collaboration with Schelling and his rejection of Schelling’s notion of ‘intellectual intuition’ – lead to the re-stated identification of Critical philosophy with scepticism that we get in the *Phenomenology*.

I have drawn this very rough sketch of the historical development of the interest in the relation of scepticism and Critical philosophy by way of an introduction to the historical context in which Hegel’s close identification of the two was initially formulated. I believe that if we are to fully understand the nature of this identification along with some of its wider implications for Hegel’s project in the *Phenomenology*, then at least the bare bones of this historical context must be borne in mind in what follows<sup>66</sup>. First, we will briefly return to the identification as it appears in the *Phenomenology* to come to a better understanding of the basis for the identification.

<sup>62</sup> This was published in *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* in two parts on the 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> February issues. The review can be found in D. Breazeale 1988, pp. 59-79.

<sup>63</sup> Translated by D. Breazeale 1988, pp. 94-137.

<sup>64</sup> In many ways the themes involved in this topic are still viewed as important in contemporary epistemology. Indeed, many of the insights of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century debate bear, at least, some comparison to discussion regarding foundations, justification and epistemic circularity, by contemporary authors such as L. Bonjour, W. Alston and E. Sosa. We will note some of these connections throughout the chapter.

<sup>65</sup> *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*, 1, no. 2 (1802), pp.1-74. A translation of this can be found in George di Giovanni and H. S. Harris (eds) 2000, pp.313-362. Henceforth the text will be referred to simply as the *Relation* essay, or by the abbreviation RSP followed by the original page reference and the translation page reference.

<sup>66</sup> Though more will be said of this context in what follows, I do not propose to engage in a detailed discussion of Hegel’s general philosophical development in this earlier period. For an excellent account of the development of Hegel’s thought in this period in reference to his contemporaries see H. S. Harris 1972 & 1983.

Second, we will consider Hegel's general analysis of scepticism and, third, see how this is involved in his discussion of 'scepticism' as a form of consciousness in the *Phenomenology*. Fourth, we will relate Hegel's analysis of scepticism back to his comments regarding Critical philosophy, clarifying the points of similarity between them and the general impact of his analysis of scepticism upon his criticism of Critical philosophy at the opening of C.(AA.).

### 1. The *Phenomenology's* Identification

The most obvious and straightforward connection between scepticism and Kantian Idealism in the *Phenomenology* is that they both succumb to the same error, they both hold thought and being fixed apart from one another and result in the familiar dialectical contradiction of asserting two contraries as truth. However, such involvement in contradiction will not explain why scepticism is a negative expression, while the idealism of Critical philosophy is a positive expression, of itself as a 'self-contradictory ambiguity'. Any form of consciousness in the dialectic of the *Phenomenology* will share in being self-contradictory and so this alone cannot account for the strong identification of the two positions. Hegel instead makes a more specific claim:

"This idealism therefore becomes the same kind of self-contradictory ambiguity as Scepticism, except that, while this expresses itself negatively, the former does so positively; but it fails equally with Scepticism to bring together its contradictory thoughts of pure consciousness being all reality, while the extraneous impulse or sensations and ideas are equally reality. Instead of bringing them together, it shifts from one to the other, and is caught up in the spurious, i.e. sensuous infinite. Since Reason is all reality in the sense of the abstract 'mine', and the 'other' is for it something indifferent and extraneous, what is here made explicit is that kind of knowing of an 'other' by Reason, which we met in the form of 'meaning', 'perceiving' and the 'Understanding', which apprehends what is 'meant' and what is 'perceived'. Such a knowing is at the same time pronounced by the very principle of this idealism not to be a true knowing, for only in the unity of apperception lies the truth of knowing. The pure Reason of this idealism, in order to reach this 'other' which is *essential* to

it, and thus is the '*in-itself*', but which it does not have within it, is therefore thrown back by its own self on to that knowing which is *not* a knowing of what is true; in this way, it condemns itself of its own knowledge and volition to being an untrue kind of knowing, and cannot get away from 'meaning' and 'perceiving', which for it have no truth. (PS 238, pp. 144/5).

The basis for the identification of the two positions in the *Phenomenology* then seems to be their equal failure to bring together. specifically, "contradictory thoughts of pure consciousness being all reality, while the extraneous impulse or sensations and ideas are equally reality" (*Ibid.*). This claim seems straightforward enough, but it will require quite a degree of unpacking before the details of the basis of the identification become clear. Before this can be done we must also note that this is simply one aspect of the identification as it occurs in the *Phenomenology*. The other aspect – that scepticism negatively expresses its self-contradictoriness while the idealism of Critical philosophy expresses it positively – must also be taken into account and clarified.

The key to this clarification is provided by the position of Hegel's discussion of scepticism in B. relative to the position of this identification in C.(AA.). The positioning would suggest that while scepticism represents a form of consciousness that is to some degree self-aware or self-conscious, it is not self-conscious to the same degree as the idealism discussed. In fact, as one of the immediate predecessors to Hegel's own absolute idealism, this 'subjective idealism' must constitute a significant advance on scepticism: it is as yet undeveloped, 'immediate Reason', it contains a moment of unification or genuine reconciliation though it fails itself to realise this and thereby relapses into being the 'same kind of self-contradictory ambiguity' as scepticism. The point is that the positioning of the identification allows us to understand what Hegel means by labelling it as *positive*.

We will recall in B. that self-consciousness's object was double: on the one hand it had the immediate object of Sense-certainty and Perception as Understanding ultimately grasps it, i.e. as an unknowable beyond, a negative over against itself, as object, and on the other hand it had itself "which is the *true essence*, and is present in the first instance only as opposed to the first object" (PS167, p.105), as object. Throughout B. the opposition of this double object, or to put it another way, the internal opposition of self-consciousness with itself, its negative self-relation, was to be removed and "the identity of itself with itself" was to become "explicit for it"

(Ibid.). This was not to be achieved by simply destroying the otherness of its object, by simply removing it in this way, but through recognising this otherness, in its independence, to be itself. By C.(AA.) this has in principle been achieved:

“Now that self-consciousness is Reason, its hitherto negative relation to otherness turns round into a positive relation. Up till now it has been concerned only with its independence and freedom, concerned to save and maintain itself for itself at the expense of the *world*, or of its own actuality, both of which appeared to it as the negative of its essence. But as Reason, assured of itself, it is at peace with them, and can endure them; for it is certain that it is itself reality, or that everything actual is none other than itself; its thinking is itself directly actuality, and thus its relationship to the latter is that of idealism. Apprehending itself in this way, it is as if the world had for it only now come into being; previously it did not understand the world; it desired it and worked on it, withdrew from it into itself and abolished it as an existence on its own account, and its own self *qua* consciousness – both as consciousness of the world as essence and as consciousness of its nothingness. In thus apprehending itself, after losing the grave of its truth, after the abolition of its actuality is itself abolished, and after the singleness of consciousness is for it in itself Absolute Essence, it discovers the world as *its* new real world, which in its permanence holds an interest for it which previously lay only in its transiency” (PS 232, pp.139/40).

So, by labelling this idealism as a *positive* expression of scepticism, Hegel is alluding to the fact that here self-consciousness's negative self-relation has been removed and it is now actual self-consciousness secure in the certainty of being all reality, of being 'I am I'. Correspondingly, as a kind of photographic negative of this, scepticism should stand as a form of self-consciousness which is the undermining of reality and as such, ultimately itself, a form in which both self and object are unessential.

We have then, the outline of the two aspects of Hegel's identification in the *Phenomenology*, one providing the point of similarity the other the point of difference. It seems that here Hegel's thoughts regarding the identification have undergone some change since his statement of it in the theses prefacing his *Dissertation*. There Critical philosophy was an *imperfect* form of scepticism, here it is a *positive* expression of the *same kind* of self-contradictory ambiguity as scepticism.

Has his estimation of Critical philosophy gone up in the intervening period? Perhaps his estimation of scepticism has fallen? While the two different identifications may initially seem at odds with one another in this way, we will come to see, as we clarify the identification made in the *Phenomenology*, filling in the outline of the two aspects, that this is not the case. The identification made in the *Phenomenology* is obviously more detailed and thorough, but it also shows itself to be inclusive of Hegel's earlier identification.

## 2. Ancient Scepticism

As has already been noted, Hegel's views concerning scepticism are, in a sense, unorthodox when compared to those of his contemporaries in the post-Kantian tradition. While he agrees with Fichte that the Schulzian scepticism is, in essence, dogmatic<sup>67</sup> he holds a much broader view of the history of scepticism and its treatment as a whole, as being a degeneration into dogmatism<sup>68</sup> that sets him apart from the likes of Reinhold and Fichte. Hegel is obviously concerned to re-instate the correct view of the relation of scepticism to philosophy as "the negative side of the cognition of the Absolute" which "directly presupposes Reason as the positive side" (RSP p.19/p.323) or as "the free side of every" genuine "philosophy" (RSP p.20/p.324), and he is keen to correct the errors of the likes of C. F. Stäudlin's *Geschichte und Geist des Scepticismus*<sup>69</sup> which he castigates Schulze for quoting<sup>70</sup>. Hegel then, seems to display a much more deeply held philosophical concern for the true nature of "authentic scepticism" or "genuine ancient scepticism" (RSP p.30/p.330) than his contemporaries, and it is arguably such concern that in a large part helps shape the *Phenomenology*. If we are to find grounds for the putative similarity between the idealism of Critical philosophy and scepticism then we will need to investigate this unorthodox view and bring to light just where and how it connects with such idealism in Hegel's view<sup>71</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> See Fichte's *Review of Aenesidemus* in G. D. Giovanni & H. S. Harris (trans. & eds.) 2000, p.138.

<sup>68</sup> RSP, pp.30-31/p.330.

<sup>69</sup> Published in two volumes in Leipzig, 1794.

<sup>70</sup> RSP, p.25/p.327.

<sup>71</sup> H. S. Harris (See G. D. Giovanni & H. S. Harris 2000, pp. 252-271) provides a nice introduction to the topic of Hegel's thought regarding Scepticism, K. Westphal 1989 and 1998, provides an account of Hegel's response to Pyrrhonian Scepticism and in particular to its Problem of the Criterion, while M. Forster 1998 (pp. 129-192) provides perhaps one of the best introductions to Hegel's thought on

Much of Hegel's knowledge of ancient scepticism came from Sextus Empiricus' *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*<sup>72</sup>. This work stands as a kind of text book of ancient scepticism, espousing and demonstrating the use of various modes of argument, or 'tropes' as they are otherwise known, against all forms of 'dogmatic' philosophy, that is, against all philosophical theories that assent to a non-evident proposition of some kind. While one specific target some of Sextus' argument is the outlook of stoicism, broadly taken the work aims to demonstrate that any attempt to discern which dogmatic theory is correct ultimately results in failure, leaving suspension of belief or *epochē* as the only sensible option. The work is well aware of its precedents in the form of the thoughts of Pyrrho of Elis (c.360-c.270 B.C.) and the academic sceptics, which arose in Plato's academy under the leadership of Arcesilaus (c. 315-240 B.C.) and Carneades (c.214-128/9 B.C.).

As indicated in the title of Sextus' work it is Pyrrho who is taken to be the founder and figurehead of such scepticism. While little is known of Pyrrho – he wrote nothing down and it is unclear whether he had any intention of founding a system of thought<sup>73</sup> – in the hands of Sextus his teachings become explicitly systematic: a list of

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scepticism in relation to his procedure in the *Phenomenology*. In an earlier work (M. Forster 1989) he provides a much fuller treatment with in depth analysis of Hegel's *Relation* essay amongst other writings. In much of what follows I am indebted to these commentators' research of this topic.

However, an alternative view of Hegel's interpretation of scepticism that takes issue with Forster's account has recently been offered by W. Dudley 2003. Dudley argues that Forster is wrong to claim that Hegel locates the superiority of ancient scepticism in their dialectical method of equipollence or *isostheneia*. Dudley thinks that Forster reaches "this conclusion ... without devoting sufficient attention to the different strains Hegel identifies *within* ancient scepticism: the Academic and the Pyrrhonian" (p.89). Sufficient attention is not paid to Hegel's thought about the different strains because Hegel "ultimately concludes their brands of scepticism are essentially the same" (Ibid.). Though the brands are ultimately the same for Hegel, Dudley believes that "attending to Hegel's discussion of the variations within ancient scepticism will show that, *pace* Forster ... Hegel does not consider equipollence to be the most advanced sceptical method, and in fact does not base his judgement of the superiority of ancient scepticism on methodological considerations at all" (Ibid.). Rather, Dudley thinks that the brands of ancient scepticism do not share a common method, what they do share is "a common form of sceptical *consciousness*" (Ibid.). That is, they arrive at the same basic philosophical insights through different methodologies, and it is the sceptical consciousness, rather than any particular method, that is the basis for Hegel's judgement of the superiority of ancient scepticism.

Dudley's argument is convincing, and while in my own account I try to show that historically there is some shared methodological influence, I locate Hegel's claims for the potency of ancient scepticism as being based on two characteristics: a refusal to rely on non-evident principles and a recognition of the general applicability of their methods to determinate claims or assertions, which are in turn founded on the basic insights or standpoint achieved by scepticism as a form of consciousness that appears in the *Phenomenology*.

<sup>72</sup> S. Empiricus 1933 (Vol. 1). It is generally thought that Hegel possessed the 'Fabricius Edition' of the text which was the best edition available at the time – see K. R. Westphal 1989, 'Notes to Chapter 1' No. 54, page 219, and H. S. Harris' translation of the *Relation* essay (*Op. Cit.*) note 52, p.359.

<sup>73</sup> Pyrrho's general view is encapsulated in the following report by his pupil Timon of Phlius (c320-230 B.C.): "...Pyrrho shows that objects are equally indifferent and unfathomable and undeterminable because neither our senses nor our judgements are true or false; so for that reason we should not trust in them but should be



ten tropes designed to induce suspension of belief on various matters<sup>74</sup>. His position seemed to consist in the view that certain general strategies (later systematised into tropes) can be used to make us realise that our differing theories about the world are ungrounded and hence *equally* at fault. Once this realisation has been made we should cease worrying over differing theories; we ought to simply refuse to assert one theory over any other, instead settling for a state of calmness or quietude called *ataraxia* about such matters. This *ataraxia*, which opened the way for *eudaimonia*, constituted the aim or goal of Pyrrhonian scepticism, the striving for beliefs being regarded as the source of avoidable mental disquietude or *tarachē*, the source of unhappiness.

The second form of scepticism – academic scepticism – developed quite independently from Pyrrhonian thought, basing itself instead on a modified version of the dialectic found in Plato's early dialogues<sup>75</sup>. While it is difficult to generalise about academic scepticism as it involved at least three separate phases of development, or periods of academy leadership: the 'old' period of Plato, the 'middle' period of Arcesilaus and the 'new' period of Carneades. I think it fair to claim generally, that the academic sceptics cultivated precise arguments used to attack specific opponents, the key to these arguments being a clear understanding of their opponent's position. That is to say, every claim of their opponent was assessed and balanced with a counter claim in order to demonstrate that the subsequent refutation of their opponent's overall position was a complete refutation.

While Sextus himself is careful not to identify his Pyrrhonian form of scepticism with the academics<sup>76</sup> their influence is nevertheless present in his

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without judgement and without inclination and unmoved, saying about each thing that it no more is than is not or both is and is not or neither is nor is not. And Timon says that for those who take this attitude the result will be first non-assertion, then tranquillity." As reported by Aristocles in Eusebius' *Preparation for the Gospel* XIV, xvii 2-4. See J. Annas & J. Barnes 1985.

<sup>74</sup> These 10 tropes as they appear in *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* are generally taken to have been invented by Aenesidemus of Cnossos, not Pyrrho. Aenesidemus originally belonged to the group of academic sceptics, though he moved away from the academy in the First Century B.C. believing it to be too dogmatic and established his own sceptical movement adopting the teachings of Pyrrho and using him as a figurehead.

<sup>75</sup> They took their cue from the *Theatetus* (see Plato 1953) in which Socrates claims:

"...the triumph of my art is in thoroughly examining whether the thought...is false and lifeless, or fertile and true...I resemble the midwives in being barren of wisdom, and the reproach which is often made against me, that I ask questions of others and have not the wit to pronounce upon any subject myself, is very just – the reason is, that the good compels me to be a midwife, but has not allowed me to bring forth." (Vol. 3, p. 245).

Indeed, not 'bringing forth' was to lead to the Pyrrhonian result of *epochē* for the Academic sceptics who urged that a proper understanding of both the arguments for and against a certain matter would lead to this result, as those arguments would be shown to be equal in respect of their force.

<sup>76</sup> See, S. Empiricus 1933, Vol. 1, pp. 133-145. Sextus believes that the middle period under the leadership of Arcesilaus brought the academics closest to Pyrrhonism (see pp.143-145) such that "his way of thought is almost identical with ours" (p.143), while the new period under Carneades (and even later under Philo and Charmidas) places the academics at odds with the Pyrrhonian sceptics.

philosophy via the figure of Aenesidemus, the real thinker whose namesake stands as the eponymous narrator of Schulze's attack on Reinhold and Kant. Aenesidemus, who broke away from the academy in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century B.C., adopted Pyrrho as the rightful figurehead of his own position, which nevertheless maintained the close argumentation of the academics. He handed down to Sextus the older ten tropes and therein the systematising influence of the academy on Pyrrho's more general position.

The resultant essential core of scepticism that Sextus endorses can be summarised by the following tenets:

5. Scepticism is to lead to *ataraxia*, this being its aim.
6. *Ataraxia* is to be achieved by demonstrating that arguments for and against a position have *equal* force, which requires a clear understanding of an opponent's position, its principles and assumptions.
7. Scepticism refrains from dogmatizing. That is, it withholds assent from all things non-evident<sup>77</sup>.

Naturally, this is not meant as a final, definitive statement of what I am calling ancient scepticism – we have not yet even reached an understanding of the way in which arguments for and against a position can be said to be 'equal' in force – but it will serve, for the time being, as an adequate basis from which to explore Hegel's reception of this kind of scepticism and from which to elucidate the position further.

In the *Relation* essay Hegel provides a critique, of sorts, of modern scepticism, which he views as being essentially dogmatic insofar as its attacks are predicated on the basis of a number of non-evident assumptions<sup>78</sup>, applauding the more

<sup>77</sup> See particularly S. Empiricus 1933, Vol. 1, pp.9-13 & 15.

<sup>78</sup> Foster argues that Hegel identified three such assumptions (see M. Forster 1989, pp.13-32). The first is that we have immediate, certain knowledge of facts regarding our current mental contents, the second is that this immediate knowledge concerns a kind of mental *thing* that is apprehended via some sort of introspection or inner perception and the third, and I think most important for Hegel, is that there exists a sharp distinction between concepts and their instances in the world, or put more generally: there is a division between thought and being. This distinction is such that there is no need for a concept to have a corresponding instance, nor is there a need for a concept ever to have had such a corresponding instance.

This is an assumption jointly shared by both modern and ancient scepticism insofar as ancient scepticism exploits it in the application of its tropes in order to arrive at *epochē*. When we come to consider the situation of 'Scepticism' within the *Phenomenology* we will see that this assumption plays an important role in its supersession as it has its basis in the finite determinations and fixed viewpoint of the Understanding.

It is also interesting to note that in contemporary movements in epistemology this assumption is still exploited as a basis for sceptical arguments in the modern style, for instance the argument to the effect that no mental state can serve as a foundation for knowledge. See section 4. of E. Sosa's 'The Raft and the Pyramid: Coherence Versus Foundations in the Theory of Knowledge' in P. French et al. (eds.) 1980, pp.3-25.

thoroughgoing ancient scepticism for its greater degree of philosophical potency. I believe Hegel's account brings out two sources for this potency<sup>79</sup> at the heart of ancient scepticism. The first can be seen through a consideration what are commonly known as 'the five tropes of Agrippa'. These are subsequent to the ten tropes handed down by Aenesidemus and were viewed by Sextus as being complementary to, but not superseding, the previous ten. However, for Hegel "(T)he *five later tropes* of scepticism ... make up the genuine arsenal of its weapons against philosophical cognition" (RSP p.38/p.334)<sup>80</sup>. Briefly, the five tropes are as follows<sup>81</sup>:

5. *Discrepancy*: is the idea that "...with regard to the object presented there has arisen ... an interminable conflict because of which we are unable either to choose a thing or reject it."<sup>82</sup>
6. *Regress ad Infinitum*: is the idea that when "...the thing adduced as a proof of the matter proposed needs a further proof, and this again another, and so on *ad infinitum* ... the consequence is suspension, as we possess no starting point for our argument."<sup>83</sup>
7. *Relativity*: is the idea that an object may only have "...such or such an appearance in relation to the subject judging and to the concomitant percepts"<sup>84</sup>. If this is the case then any judgement as to its real nature must be suspended.
8. *Hypothesis*: is the idea that in instances where a regress has been forced (2.) and a solution has been provided by taking a starting point for granted "..."

<sup>79</sup> C.f. RSP pp.20-25/pp.324-327.

<sup>80</sup> Hegel's views regarding these five tropes in comparison to the earlier ten undergo some alteration in the time between the *Relation* essay and his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. In the *Relation* essay he praises the earlier tropes for their utility in combating the dogmatism of the Understanding and castigates the later, more well-formed and potent tropes of Agrippa, due to a tendency of their misapplication against genuine Philosophical Science. Against such Science they are ineffectual. In the *Lectures* their impotence against Philosophical Science is noted at length, however the earlier ten tropes are now criticised for their crudity while the five are praised for their exhaustiveness as regards the determinations of the Understanding. Nevertheless, these minor alterations do not effect Hegel's overriding view that the later tropes are superior to the earlier ones, a view which remains constant across both works.

<sup>81</sup> In the following list I have adopted the headings used in Sextus' own text: "...the first based on discrepancy, the second on regress *ad infinitum*, the third on relativity, the fourth on hypothesis, the fifth on circular reasoning." S. Empiricus 1933, Vol. 1, pp. 94/95.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

simply and without demonstration”<sup>85</sup>, then this starting point is not established as it has not been demonstrated and we should suspend belief on the matter.

9. *Circularity*: is the idea that when the “...proof itself which ought to establish the matter of inquiry requires confirmation derived from that matter”<sup>86</sup> neither the proof nor the matter can be taken to establish the other and we must suspend judgement.

These five tropes form the basis of what has come to be known as ‘Agrippa’s Trilemma’, that is, if we forward a claim as grounded or justified, then the sceptic can force us to choose between accepting that our claim is mere assertion, accepting that it succumbs to an infinite regress of grounds, or accepting that it has a circular proof, via the application of one or more of the five tropes. In essence this trilemma is at the heart of the contemporary ‘Regress Argument of Justification’<sup>87</sup>. It also forms the backbone of the ‘Problem of the Criterion’, formulated by Sextus in the following way:

“...some have declared that a criterion exists ... let them tell us whereby it is to be decided, since we have no accepted criterion, and do not even know, but are still inquiring, whether any criterion exists. Besides, in order to decide the dispute which has arisen about the criterion, we must possess an accepted criterion by which we shall be able to judge the dispute; and in order to possess an accepted criterion, the dispute about the criterion must first be decided. And when the argument thus reduces itself to a form of circular reasoning the discovery of the criterion becomes impracticable, since we do not allow them to adopt a criterion by assumption, while if they offer to judge the criterion by a criterion we force them to a regress *ad infinitum*. And furthermore, since demonstration requires a demonstrated criterion, while the criterion requires an approved demonstration, they are forced into circular reasoning.”<sup>88</sup>

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> The Regress Argument is usually taken to show that the only alternatives to admitting foundational, non-inferentially justified beliefs are circularity, infinite regress or dogmatic assertion. The argument is first mentioned, in one form, in Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*, ed. & trans. J. Barnes (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 1975, Book 1, Ch 2-3. For two more recent viewpoints on this argument see L. Bonjour 1978 and W. Alston 1976.

<sup>88</sup> S. Empiricus 1933, Vol. I, Book II, Chapter IV, pp. 162-165. The problem can be further clarified by reformulating it as follows:

1. To be able to identify instances of an accepted criterion and to be justified in believing that they are true we must already be justified in believing of the accepted criterion that it is true.
2. To be justified in believing of an accepted criterion that it is true we must already be able to identify instances of it and be justified in believing that those instances are true.

The worry is that if we are unable to demonstrate instances in which the conditions set forth for justification are met then it's not clear that the conditions aren't simply assumed or arbitrary. If they are not arbitrary there should be no problem in highlighting instances in which they are met; after all, how did we come to be aware of them in the first place if not through instances in which they obtain? The problem is that identifying instances in which they obtain as opposed to ones in which they do not, can only be achieved if we already know the conditions; we can't discriminate between the instances if we don't know the conditions.

At the heart of these problems and underpinning the application of the 'genuine arsenal of scepticism's weapons' is the technique of *isostheneia* or 'equipollence'. Literally the term means 'equality of power' and is, simply put, the equivalence of two or more propositions in respect of their justification. To the ancient sceptic equipollence could be put to good use: an opposing proposition could be introduced into a discussion with the same justificatory power as the original proposition under discussion, thus forcing suspension of belief upon the matter; this is how, via trope 4, we can suspend belief. Hegel himself notes this use when explaining the employment of the five tropes against dogmatism<sup>89</sup>, claiming that in order to avoid circularity and regress regarding grounds we might assume a ground as "grounded in itself", but without adequate demonstration the "opposite can be presupposed with

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It seems that if both A. and B. are correct then we are trapped in a circle, and if we simply assume a criterion or assume instances of it then we can be accused of merely begging the question. The problem boils down to that of providing a non-sceptical solution: of denying A. or B. or providing some way out of the circle.

In a sense such problems can provide a focus for contemporary debates surrounding internalist and externalist accounts of justification. The Problem of the Criterion often leads epistemologists to question whether the sceptic's demand for a fully reflective justification of grounds is reasonable, a demand that generally has a strong grip on internalists, but need not have any grip on externalists (insofar as they reject any kind of cognitive accessibility requirement). Many epistemologists who do not wish to deny the rationale behind externalist accounts but nevertheless feel that something must be said in response to the sceptic, offer epistemically circular responses to the problem. See E. Sosa 1997 and W. Alston 1986 and 1980. Feeling that something more needs to be said in response to the sceptic is an intuition that is curiously common amongst such epistemologists and it raises interesting questions regarding the philosophical value of externalist analyses of epistemic concepts and their role in any attempts to naturalize epistemology. An interesting discussion of such questions can be found in R. Fumerton 1995, pp.159-181. Fumerton concludes: "(I)t seems to many of us that the externalist is simply missing the point of the philosophical inquiry when externalist analyses of epistemic concepts continue to be presupposed as the sceptical challenge is repeated at the metalevels. But the only explanation for this is that the externalist analysis of epistemic concepts never was adequate to a philosophical understanding of epistemic concepts" (p. 181). This explanation, it could be suggested, also accounts for the desire to say more in response to the sceptic amongst those who don't wish to deny the externalist's underlying rationale.

While I do not intend to discuss the issue of epistemic circularity as a response to this kind of scepticism it should be noted that T. Rockmore 1986 & 1992 argues that Hegel's response is, ultimately, epistemically circular.

<sup>89</sup> RSP pp.40-41/pp.335-6.

equal right without being unproved or grounded” (RSP p.40/p.336). The idea then is that a claim that is lacking a demonstrable ground will always be open to attack by an equipollent contrary; an opposing claim of the same justificatory right, i.e. one that is also lacking a demonstrable ground. In such a case it seems that we require a way of deciding between the claims if we are to escape suspension of belief and whatever the way, its ground must be demonstrable if it is to avoid attack by equipollent contrary. The essential insight underpinning this use of equipollence is what Hegel calls earlier in the *Relation* essay “the principle of Scepticism: *panti logōi logos isos antikeitai* [“against every argument there is an equal one on the other side”]” (RSP p.21/p.325).

The key feature of this technique to notice is that its proper application depends upon the avoidance of assertion or assumption of any principles, in line with tenet 3. sketched above. That is, it putatively constitutes a sceptical method which is not predicated on any non-evident assumptions. The tactic therefore, is one of immanent critique: a refutation based on the principles and grounds that the opponent uses. In this sense it is a form of self-refutation and it is this characteristic that accounts for why we lose confidence in those principles and grounds. Once all such principles and grounds have been shown to support equipollent contrary positions we are purged of any confidence in them. The ancient sceptic does not, however, assert any of these principles or grounds, or any other<sup>90</sup>.

However, it would seem that if we are purged of any confidence we placed in the principles and grounds of our opponent’s claim, then we should also be purged of any confidence we placed in the sceptical argumentation that brought us to this point, insofar as that argumentation relied on the principles and grounds of the now suspect claim of our opponent in order to operate. Indeed, when responding to whether or not the sceptic dogmatizes Sextus notes:

“When we say that the Sceptic refrains from dogmatizing we do not use the term “dogma” as some do, in the broader sense of “approval of a thing” for the Sceptic gives assent to the feelings which are the necessary results of sense-impressions, and he would not, for example, say when feeling hot or cold “I believe that I am not hot or cold”; but we say that “he does not dogmatize” using “dogma” in the sense, which some give it, of “assent to

<sup>90</sup> See S. Empiricus 1933, Vol. 1, Book 1, Ch. XX, p.111-113. The ancient sceptic is very careful to make plain that any claims that could be viewed as assertion on his/her behalf are in fact not assertions. At most this sceptic may say “it *appears* to me that such and such” but the guiding thought is that no single claim is to be asserted or established over against any other.

one of the non-evident objects of scientific inquiry”; for the Pyrrhonian philosopher assents to nothing that is non-evident ... the Sceptic does not posit ... formulae in any absolute sense; for he conceives that, just as the formula “All things are false” asserts the falsity of itself as well as of everything else, as does the formula “Nothing is true”, so also the formula “No more” asserts that itself, like all the rest, is “No more (this than that)”, and thus cancels itself along with the rest. And of the other formulae we say the same. If then ... the Sceptic enunciates his formulae so that they are virtually cancelled by themselves, he should not be said to dogmatize in his enunciation of them. And, most important of all, in his enunciation of these formulae he states what appears to himself and announces his own impression in an undogmatic way, without making any positive assertion regarding the external realities.”<sup>91</sup>

This self-cancelling feature of ancient scepticism, based on the Pyrrhonist’s insistence not to dogmatize (which itself underpins the use of equipollence as a form of immanent critique) helps ensure their non-dogmatizing – it provides a scepticism that overcomes itself and is truly sceptical through and through. It is this non-dogmatic character, or absence of a reliance on non-evident grounds that constitutes the first source of the ancient sceptic’s potency, as I see it, for Hegel. According to this sceptic, this does not mean that the position is simply to be dismissed or ignored, rather:

“just as it is not impossible for the man who has ascended to a high place by a ladder to overturn the ladder with his foot after his ascent, so also it is not unlikely that the Sceptic after he has arrived at the demonstration of his thesis by means of argument proving the non-existence of proof, as it were by a step ladder, should then abolish this very argument.”<sup>92</sup>

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* Ch VII, pp. 9-11.

<sup>92</sup> S. Empiricus 1933, Vol. II, Bk. II, pp.487-489. It is interesting to compare this use of a step-ladder analogy to Plato’s characterisation of Reason’s ability to practice dialectic in the *Republic* where Socrates tells Glaucon “When it takes things for granted, it doesn’t treat them as starting-points, but as basic in the strict sense – as platforms and rungs, for example. These serve it until it reaches a point where nothing needs to be taken for granted, and which is the starting-point for everything.” (Plato 1993, p. 239, 511b-c). Hegel, to some degree, views the procedures of scepticism as acting in this manner and, as we shall see, ultimately views Scepticism as the form of consciousness which first becomes aware of the dialectic as having its source in consciousness, instead of being external to it.

It is such a thoroughgoing refusal to be dogmatic – to the point of self-cancellation – that separates modern scepticism from ancient scepticism in Hegel's mind<sup>93</sup>. It is what permits equipollence to function as a type of self-refutation, and it also provides the basis for the second source, viz. the generality of their procedures for attacking opponents.

As far as the ancient sceptic was concerned every matter of inquiry admits of being brought under at least one of their tropes and Hegel concurs that these later tropes will constitute a problem for any claim to knowledge as any attempt to ground such a claim will result in either regress or circularity, whereas leaving the claim ungrounded or positing a non-demonstrable ground for the claim licenses the application of an equipollent contrary. He notes:

“Scepticism does not operate by bringing forward what is called a difficulty, a possibility of representing the matter otherwise; that would merely indicate some sort of fancy which is contingent as regards this asserted knowledge. Scepticism is not an empiric matter such as this, for it contains a scientific aim, its tropes turn on the Notion, the very essence of determinateness, and are exhaustive as regards the determinate ... These tropes are necessary contradictions into which the understanding falls ... Now, speaking generally, this is the method of Scepticism, and it is most important. Because the sceptical conscience demonstrates that in all that is immediately accepted there is nothing secure and absolute, the Sceptics have taken in hand all particular determinations of the individual sciences, and have shown that they are not fixed ... this far-seeing power of abstraction is also requisite in order to recognise these determinations of negation or of opposition everywhere present in all concrete matter, and in all that is thought, and to find in this determinate its limits” (LHP, Vol.2, p.365).

This scepticism is ‘exhaustive as regards the determinate’ and each ‘definite assertion’ is ‘set over against its other’. This generality of application constitutes the

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<sup>93</sup> For Hegel “genuine ancient scepticism” or “authentic scepticism” which “maintains a pure negativity in relation to knowledge”, was initially “just as little directed *against* philosophy as *for* it”, however it turned against philosophy “as soon as philosophy became dogmatism” and this turning, in Hegel's eyes, “illustrates how it (scepticism) has kept in step with the communal degeneration of philosophy and of the world in general” until it becomes modern scepticism, in which:

“it has sunk so far in company with dogmatism ... that, since the extremes now touch, the great goal is attained once more on their side in these happy times, that dogmatism and scepticism coincide with one another *on the underside*, and offer each other the hand of perfect freinship and fraternity. Schulzian scepticism integrates the crudest dogmatism into itself, and Krug's dogmatism carries that scepticism within itself likewise” (RSP p.30/p.330).



second source of ancient scepticism's potency for Hegel<sup>94</sup>. The main feature to be noted regarding this is that scepticism's tropes, for Hegel, articulate *real* doubts, "necessary contradictions into which the understanding falls" (Ibid.), not idle, abstract possibilities. This scepticism offers actual arguments establishing the opposite of what is taken to be the case, it "*demonstrates* that in all that is immediately accepted there is nothing secure and absolute" (Ibid., my emphasis).

Now, before turning to a consideration of scepticism as a form of consciousness in the *Phenomenology*, there remains one more important aspect of its character to elucidate. This aspect also stems from its insistence not to dogmatize, and is perhaps best described as the lack of a positive reflexive description or account. I do not mean by this that such scepticism is unable to describe itself in some way – it may describe itself as involving adherence to something like the three tenets mentioned earlier – but only that any description it gives, by that scepticism's own lights, will be a description that, at best, can lay claim to being only an appearance: the sceptic is restricted to a reflexive account that does not overstep the boundary of how matters merely seem to him/herself<sup>95</sup>. It seems that beyond the operations of ancient scepticism, which rely on the assertions and principles of other positions for matter to operate on, any self-description will be empty of content, or at least empty of any content that is not subject to sceptical subversion. This scepticism then, seems to be no real position at all, that is, it does indeed appear to maintain "a pure negativity in relation to knowledge" (RSP p.30/p.330), even in relation to self-knowledge. It does stand as purely negative.

### 3. Scepticism as a Form of Consciousness

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<sup>94</sup> Naturally there is a sense in which any method, insofar as it constitutes a method, will be generally applicable across its domain, however, what is being highlighted here is that ancient scepticism can be generally applied to assertions, claims etc. in a way that modern scepticism, in Hegel's view, cannot. It's generality is meant to be taken in contrast to the more restricted standpoint of modern scepticism. This generality is, of course, a function of the ancient sceptic's refusal to dogmatize which goes so far as to prove self-cancelling in its argumentation against opponents.

<sup>95</sup> C.f. "If then ... the sceptic enunciates his formulae so that they are virtually cancelled by themselves, he should not be said to dogmatize in his enunciation of them. And, most important of all, in his enunciation of these formulae he states what appears to himself and announces his own impression in an undogmatic way, without making any positive assertion regarding the external realities" S. Empiricus 1933, Vol. 1, Book 1, Ch. XX, p.111-113.

When we turn to scepticism as a particular form of consciousness developed within the dialectic of the *Phenomenology*, as we would expect, we find both sources of potency invoked in the characterisation provided there.

“With the reflection of self-consciousness into the simple thought of itself, the independent existence or permanent determinateness that stood over against that reflection has, as a matter of fact, fallen outside of the infinitude of thought. In Scepticism, now, the wholly unessential and non-independent character of this ‘other’ becomes explicit *for consciousness*; the [abstract] thought becomes the concrete thinking which annihilates the being of the world in all its manifold determinateness, and the negativity of free self-consciousness comes to know itself in the many and varied forms of life as a real negativity ... this polemical bearing towards the manifold independence of things will ... be successful, because it turns against them as a free self-consciousness that is already complete in its own self; more specifically, because it is *thinking*, or is in its own self infinite, and in this infinitude the independent things in their differences from one another are only vanishing magnitudes. The differences, which in the pure thinking of self-consciousness are only the abstraction of differences, here become the *entirety* of differences, and the whole of differentiated being becomes a difference of self-consciousness”. (PS 202, p.123).

This passage is difficult and in need of unpacking if we are to clearly see the involvement of the sources of potency identified in the analysis above<sup>96</sup>. We should begin this unpacking by sharpening the claim that Hegel is making for scepticism here. His contention is that in scepticism we have a form of self-consciousness that will be successful in overcoming the ‘other’ in a way in which the other previous forms of self-consciousness in B. were not. That is, it is with scepticism that “the

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<sup>96</sup> While it is generally accepted that the form of consciousness in the *Phenomenology* called scepticism is to be identified as the genuine ancient scepticism that Hegel refers to and discusses in other works, it is, in fact, not clearly labelled as this and some evidence ought to be adduced in support of this assumption. Some commentators point to the fact that this form of consciousness follows stoicism and provide a historical reading of this section as a whole. Most attempt to establish a link, as I am doing, between the characterisation given in the *Phenomenology* and Hegel’s analyses of genuine, ancient as opposed to modern scepticism elsewhere. This is the point at which Dudley’s criticisms of Forster (who gives a broad historical reading of the dialectical development of the *Phenomenology* –see Forster 1998) begin to get some purchase. It is not simply the methods of ancient scepticism (e.g. of Pyrrhonian, Academic Scepticism etc.), but an underlying sceptical form of consciousness (‘genuine ancient scepticism’ or ‘authentic scepticism’) that accounts for its philosophical potency. This is perhaps why Hegel discusses this form simply as ‘scepticism’ and not as ‘ancient’ or ‘Pyrrhonian/academic scepticism’ in the *Phenomenology*.

wholly unessential and non-independent character of this ‘other’ becomes explicit *for consciousness*” (*Ibid.*). We will recall that the general problem in B. was self-consciousness’s negative self-relation, that is to say, instead of simply recognising itself in the object, the object seemed to self-consciousness to be other than itself. This was due to the fact that at the outset of B. we were faced with a form of (self) consciousness that was only implicitly self-consciousness, merely the immediate conviction or certainty that its object was not other than itself. ‘We’ had seen that its object truly was not other than itself, but for that form itself, though certain of this, its own self was only to be found present in opposition to its object<sup>97</sup>. Throughout B. this opposition was to be overcome and self-consciousness was to find itself present in this object, not merely present in opposition to this object. The claim here, with scepticism, is that this opposition is overcome: “the non-independent character of this ‘other’ becomes explicit *for consciousness*” (*Ibid.*), though in the negative sense of being “wholly unessential”; scepticism “annihilates the being of the world in all its manifold determinateness”.

In what way then can the sources of potency be said to be involved in this characterisation of scepticism? Well, the telling phrase in this regard is Hegel’s claim that “(W)ith the reflection of self-consciousness into the simple thought of itself, the independent existence or permanent determinateness that stood over against that reflection has, as a matter of fact, fallen outside of the infinitude of thought” (*Ibid.*). Essentially, this is a summary of sorts of the situation in stoicism that immediately precedes scepticism. Stoicism is given the following characterisation:

“Its principle is that consciousness is a being that *thinks*, and that consciousness holds something to be essentially important, or true and good only in so far as it *thinks* it to be such ... Now, it is true that for this self-consciousness the essence is neither an other than itself, nor the pure abstraction of the ‘I’, but an ‘I’ which has otherness within itself, though in the form of *thought*, so that in its otherness it has directly returned into itself” (PS 198 & 200, pp.121/2).

<sup>97</sup> “Consciousness, as self-consciousness ... has a double object: one is the immediate object, that of sense-certainty and perception, which however *for self-consciousness* has the character of a *negative*; and the second, viz. *itself*, which is the true *essence*, and is present in the first instance only as opposed to the first object.” (PS 167, p.105).

The reason that stoicism fails to completely overcome the otherness in the way that scepticism does even though it internalises the otherness in the form of thought, is that in stoicism this thought remains too abstract and is essentially contentless. Stoicism recognises only pure or abstract thought as its truth and not the determinateness of the multiplicity of things. It thereby has “(*W*)ithdrawn from existence only into itself, it has not there achieved its consummation as absolute negation of that existence” (PS 201, p.122). This comes only with scepticism “the realization of that of which Stoicism was only the Notion” (PS 202, p.123). The withdrawal is, however, what causes the “independent existence” or “determinateness” to “fall outside the infinitude of thought” or, in other words, it is what makes scepticism aware of the unessential character of this determinateness and allows it to “annihilate” it completely.

To be more specific, in claiming that this other falls outside of the infinitude of thought Hegel means that it becomes finite, limited in some sense. That is, it is taken to have fixed, limiting boundaries. But why does such limitation permit scepticism to become aware of the unessential and non-independent character of such determination? The answer lies in the fact that if something is finite or limited then it is so in virtue of something else standing over against it in a limiting fashion, providing its boundaries. In the case of scepticism it is scepticism as the infinitude of thought that is doing the limiting: “it is *thinking*, or is in its own self infinite” (*Ibid.*). Now insofar as this limiting other provides a limit to, or better, delimits that which it stands over against, it is involved in a determining relation to that which it stands over against. The consequence is that a finite or limited determination fails to entirely contain its ground within itself, rather this ground involves the relation to that which stands over against it (that which is outside of it, is *not* it), and hence, “in this infinitude the independent things in their differences from one another are only vanishing magnitudes” (*Ibid.*). As far as stoicism is concerned this is not, strictly speaking, the case. Stoicism is simply the withdrawal into this infinitude as its truth, the finite determinations it encounters in the world still, to some degree, remain alien or independent from itself; in their determinateness they are simply given to stoicism, and stoicism is not aware of that in virtue of which they prove determinate. In scepticism, however, the limited determinations become unessential or non-independent; aware of itself as their ground and limit scepticism takes such determinations as being both its own and as being fluid. No one appearance or determination is to be favoured over any other.

Now, one might think that Hegel is here, illegitimately, making an idealism out of scepticism and that the sceptic would not concur with such an analysis of his position, i.e. that Hegel is unfairly setting up a position to deliver positive results in respect of self-consciousness's development in B. which a true representation of the position would resist. It is of course true that Hegel is providing his reader with a meta-level account of scepticism located in the context of his own, wider philosophical concerns, mining the position, so to speak, for content relevant to self-consciousness's overcoming of its negative self-relation, but is there anything in his presentation that the sceptic could really, in principle, disagree with? This is a difficult question to answer to everyone's satisfaction, but it is important to note a few things in Hegel's defence regarding this issue.

While 'we' can see that the falling outside of the infinitude of thought of self-consciousness's other that arises from stoicism's withdrawal into itself, is what allows scepticism's awareness of this other as unessential or non-independent, this does not of itself constitute any kind of positive or dogmatic assertion on behalf of the sceptic. Insofar as the sceptic counsels *epochē* on all matters via the employment of its tropes and method of equipollence, it does indeed appear to constitute an awareness of this other as unessential or non-independent, in Hegel's sense. This is due to the fact that the condition for the employment of the tropes and equipollence is the finite character of this other. That is, the sceptic's methods function by exploiting the relation that one determinate object bears to others, viz. the ground of its determination is constituted in this relation to others, such that if taken independently of the others its ground cannot be demonstrated and is non-evident. If taken independently then a contrary can be equiposed to it, claimed as independent with equal justificatory right. The problem thereby arises that, if what is being claimed as independent is finite, insofar as it has boundaries or limits such that there is something beyond or outside of it, then it will always be open to sceptical methods of attack, because its putative independence always stands in relation to that which is beyond or outside of it. It is only independent or determinate insofar as it is independent *from* or determinate *in relation to* this beyond, this other. As long as what is posited as a given truth is finite

in this manner then we cannot nullify sceptical attack<sup>98</sup>, and that given truth cannot stand as independent or essential.

The awareness then of the non-independence or unessentiality of the other that is constitutive of the sceptical form of self-consciousness is, for Hegel, an implicit awareness of the relational character of finite determinacy. It is this implicit awareness that permits the sceptic's methods to function so exhaustively "as regards the determinate" (LHP Vol.2, p.365) and which allows the sceptic to avoid dogmatic assertion. In short, it is this awareness that at base gives rise to the potencies identified earlier.

It is difficult to see that the sceptic has much to disagree with in this analysis: after all, it is not being claimed that the sceptic asserts the relational character of finite determinacy as truth. Nevertheless, it does appear to be the case that the sceptic depends on these things or is limited to them if his/her methods are to function and the sceptic would freely admit to adopting the principles and assumptions of his/her opponent in order to demonstrate that they are self-refuting<sup>99</sup>. That is to say, this awareness seems to underpin the sceptic's lack of a positive reflexive description and its potencies alike, and given its lack of a positive reflexive description, it seems that such scepticism has little, if anything at all to say in opposition to Hegel's analysis.

Hegel makes much of this limited character of scepticism in both his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and the *Relation* essay:

"the operations of Scepticism are undoubtedly directed against the finite. But however much force these moments of its negative dialectic may have against the properly-speaking dogmatic knowledge of the understanding, its attacks against the true infinite of the speculative Idea are most feeble and unsatisfactory. For this last is in its nature nothing finite or determinate ... in itself it is round, it contains this determinate and its opposite in their identity in itself. In so far as this Idea, as the unity of these opposites, is itself again

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<sup>98</sup> In fact, it seems we can only nullify such possibilities if we are able to show that the ground of such determinations is not finite, does not have fixed limiting boundaries in this sense. Hence Hegel's talk in the 'Preface' (and elsewhere) of "freeing determinate thoughts from their fixity" (PS 33, p.20) or his assertion in the *Difference* essay that "Reason reaches the Absolute only by stepping outside of this manifold of parts" (DF p.90).

<sup>99</sup> The awareness of the relational character can only be predicated on the basis of a division between finite/infinite, thought/being, appearance/reality and so forth, divisions which are enshrined in the principles and assumptions of the sceptic's opponents and which the sceptic adopts for the sake of demonstrating self-refutation. In this sense the awareness of the relational character etc. is already present (though buried) in such positions, and through his demonstration of self-refutation the sceptic brings out this content and its shortcomings.

outwardly a determinate, it stands exposed to the power of the negative; indeed its nature and reality is just to move continually on, so that as determinate it again places itself in unity with the determinate opposed to it, and thus organises itself into a whole whose starting point again coincides with the final result ... if Scepticism attempts to deal with this properly speculative element, it can in no way lay hold of it...the method of its procedure against the rational is this, that it makes the latter into a determinate, and always first of all introduces into it a finite thought-determination or idea of relationship to which it adheres, but which is not really in the infinite at all; and then it argues against the same. That is to say it comprehends it falsely and then proceeds to contradict it. Or it first of all gives the infinite the itch in order to be able to scratch it" (LHP Vol.2, pp.367/8).

"since these tropes all involve the concept of a finite [world], and are grounded on that, the immediate result of their application to the rational is that they pervert it into something finite; they give it the itch of limitedness, as an excuse for scratching it. The tropes are not, in and for themselves, directed against rational thinking; but when they are [willfully] directed upon it ... they immediately alter the rational."<sup>100</sup> (RSP p.42/p.337)

So the sceptical method is only to be properly applied to the finite deliverances of the Understanding and is, in a sense, limited to them. The importance of this, for Hegel, is that in depending on, developing from and destroying its opponent's positions, scepticism not only exhibits dialectical movement but is aware of itself as such movement:

"(D)ialectic as a negative movement, just as it immediately *is*, at first appears to consciousness as something which has it at its mercy, and which does not have its source in consciousness itself. As Scepticism, on the other hand, it is a moment of self-consciousness, to which it does not *happen* that its truth and reality vanish without its knowing how, but which, in the certainty of its freedom, *makes* this 'other' which claims to be real, vanish" (PS 204, p.124).

<sup>100</sup> We should note here that the echoing of this phrase in the *Lectures* provides evidence that in the intervening period between the two works Hegel's views on scepticism remained fundamentally the same. When compared to the difference between the identifications of Critical philosophy with scepticism in the *Dissertation* and the *Phenomenology* this suggests that it was his views regarding Critical philosophy that underwent the more significant change in this period.

Scepticism is aware of how it counterbalances dogmatic assertion with equipollent contraries; it is aware of how a putative truth or reality is to be reduced to *epochē* and actively brings it about. As scepticism

“consciousness itself is the *absolute dialectical unrest*, this medley of sensuous and intellectual representations whose differences coincide, and whose identity is equally again dissolved, for it is itself determinateness contrasted with the non-identical. But it is just in this process that this consciousness, instead of being self-identical, is in fact nothing but a purely casual, confused medley, the dizziness of a perpetually self-engendered disorder. It is aware of this; for itself maintains and creates this restless confusion. Hence, it also admits to it, it owns to being a wholly contingent, single, and separate consciousness – a consciousness which is *empirical*, which takes its guidance from what has no reality for it, which obeys what is for it not an *essential* being, which does those things and brings to realization what it knows has no truth for it. But equally ... it also ... converts itself again into a consciousness that is universal and self-identical; for it is the negativity of all singularity and all difference” (PS 205, pp.124/5).

It is here that Hegel diverges from that which the sceptic would, at first sight, be prepared to countenance. Scepticism as dialectical unrest is internally contradictory for Hegel, because it simultaneously claims that the application of its method demonstrates that we ought to suspend judgement regarding the truth or reality of the world – at best things simply appear to be such and such – and yet it is happy then to content itself with the world as appearance, to live according to its apparent laws, to acknowledge its affections<sup>101</sup>. Now, as it stands this is not, strictly speaking, contradictory, but given Hegel’s analysis of scepticism within the context of self-consciousness’s development in B, it translates into a contradictory state of affairs for self-consciousness, because here self-consciousness affirms the nullity of the determinations of the world and yet it is itself these determinations, i.e. this nullity.

The other that is found in scepticism to be unessential is, nothing but its own

<sup>101</sup> “We do not...suppose that the sceptic is wholly untroubled; but we say that he is troubled by things unavoidable; for we grant that he is cold at times and thirsty, and suffers various affections of that kind” S. Empiricus 1933, Vol. 1, Book 1, Ch XII, p.21. This kind of mismatch between the sceptic’s target of *epochē* and his everyday behaviour toward empirical matters is well known and is usually developed into an objection along the lines that it is impossible to live scepticism as the ancient sceptic prescribes it. For an example, see M. Burnyeat 1982.



determinations as consciousness, and so as scepticism self-consciousness at once becomes both essential and unessential to itself. The experience of this, Hegel claims, gives rise to a new form of self-consciousness: the 'Unhappy Consciousness'.

Naturally, the sceptic could disagree with Hegel's characterisation by claiming that (s)he affirms nothing, and certainly not the nullity of the determinations of the sensuous world, but given that Hegel's analysis does not have the sceptic asserting any truth regarding such determinations, instead it claims that the application of the method depends upon an implicit awareness of such unessentiality or nullity, it is difficult to decide who has the upper hand. If the sceptic agrees with Hegel's analysis of the underpinnings of his/her method, in which I've suggested (s)he has little to take issue with, then (s)he should acknowledge the difficulty that Scepticism engenders. This is, however, a big 'if' and I do not claim to have resolved the issue in Hegel's favour, I wish only to highlight that Hegel in no way negligently sets up a form of self-consciousness in scepticism that unfairly moulds a historical position to his own end. Rather, as we would expect, he attempts to conduct a discussion about the true nature of that position to which an adherent of it could relate.

Scepticism's key potencies: its refusal to dogmatize and its generality of application stemming from this, are features which the ancient sceptic would agree are key to his position. Maintaining a consistent refusal to dogmatize, however, results in a position with no positive reflexive description and it seems the ancient sceptic must also agree with this. It is this lack of a positive reflexive description that Hegel exploits, arguing that the condition of this scepticism is an implicit awareness of the relational character of finite determinacy (which in the *Phenomenology* manifests itself as scepticism's awareness of the non-independence or unessentiality of its other). Without this awareness of the relational character, such scepticism is not possible. Hegel's strategy then, seems sensitized to a different form of scepticism than Kant's, insofar as Kant's anti-sceptical transcendental arguments generally function by establishing that the falsity of some accepted sceptical view is a condition for the possibility of some accepted phenomenon. Here the scepticism in question would be in possession of a positive reflexive description and would accept that the phenomenon for which the falsity of its view is a condition, exists. In other words, such arguments might prove effective against what Hegel would call 'modern scepticism', but would not prove so against that scepticism's purer ancestor: genuine ancient scepticism or authentic scepticism.

Ultimately then, in the context of the *Phenomenology* we are presented with a position in scepticism that corresponds to both Hegel's earlier analysis in the *Relation* essay and his later analysis in the *Lectures*. It is a position which turns the Understanding's own capacity to set limits, against itself insofar as it functions by accepting its opponent's assumptions and principles for the sake of demonstrating that they refute themselves.

#### 4. Scepticism and Critical Philosophy

We can now turn to Hegel's reception of Critical philosophy and, using our analysis of scepticism, draw out the points of similarity which form the basis of his close identification of the two positions with one another. Inevitably this will involve drawing on texts aside from the *Phenomenology*, though as far as the specific criticisms that Hegel makes regarding Critical philosophy and their effect on the identification of it with scepticism are concerned, I think it best to remain within the confines of the *Phenomenology* where possible. Hegel makes many criticisms and comments regarding the Critical Philosophy of Kant, Fichte and others in a number of texts<sup>102</sup>, but he chooses not to state them all at the point of the identification in the *Phenomenology*. Instead what we are given here are the general, or most pressing criticisms which account for the failure of Critical philosophy to "comprehend its own self" (PS 234, p.141) and to be based on more than "pure *assertion*" (*Ibid.*), as well as the putative identification, and so while we will have recourse to Hegel's comments in other texts we should bear in mind their relation to those of the *Phenomenology*.

There are two basic points of similarity that account for the close identification of the philosophies. The first is given in Kant's identification of Reason as the faculty of the unconditioned – predicated on his recognition of the limitation of the deliverances of the understanding (CPR A293/B350-A309/B366) – which makes the antinomies into which consciousness falls necessary (CPR A407/B434). As we will come to see, this is essentially what we have with scepticism. For Kant, the totality of the conditions under which the judgements supplied by the understanding regarding objects are true, is not to be found in experience. In experience we are given the

<sup>102</sup> For example see: the discussion of 'Kantian Philosophy' in FK, 'Notion in General' in SL, sections 40-60 in EL, paragraphs 413-424 in the *Berlin Phenomenology*, various sections in LHP and DF.

conditions individually and so if we are to discover the totality of these conditions we must abstract from experience, considering it as a whole or a unity. But in attempting to do this we come up with concepts that exceed the limits of possible experience and hence those of knowledge as well, because we are abstracting from the deliverances of the understanding. When we accept these concepts that remain beyond the limits of possible experience – what Kant calls ‘Transcendental Ideas’ – as real, as constitutive rather than regulative, we fall into error and contradiction. That is to say, when we conflate these transcendental ideas with the concepts of the understanding rather than recognising their proper role as guides to the concepts of the understanding, for Kant we overstep the limits of critical thought.

In the case of the antinomy of pure reason “(W)e have ... presented to us ... an entirely natural antithetic ... into which reason of itself quite unavoidably falls” (CPR A407/B434). In the various forms of this natural antithetic our conflation of transcendental ideas with the concepts of the understanding leads to pairs of seemingly conflicting transcendental ideas regarding an object, which bear a striking resemblance to pairs of equipollent contraries that a sceptic might invoke to engender *epochē*, insofar as they share a common structure: “no one assertion can establish superiority over another” (CPR A421/B448) as “the assertion of the opposite has, on its side, grounds that are just as valid and necessary” (CPR A421/B449) and both are ultimately founded on empirical cognition, i.e. cognition of the limited or finite. The similarity of his procedure to scepticism is, naturally, not lost on Kant and he is careful to delineate the point of difference between them.

“This method of watching, or rather provoking, a conflict of assertions, not for the purpose of deciding in favour of one or the other side, but of investigating whether the object of controversy is not perhaps a deceptive appearance which each vainly strives to grasp, and in regard to which, even if there were no opposition to be overcome, neither can arrive at any result – this procedure, I say, may be entitled the *sceptical method*. It is altogether different from *scepticism* – a principle of technical and scientific ignorance, which undermines the foundations of all knowledge, and strives in all possible ways to destroy its reliability and steadfastness. For the sceptical method aims at certainty. It seeks to discover the point of misunderstanding in the case of disputes which are sincerely and competently conducted by both sides....Reason, which does not in abstract speculation easily become

aware of its errors, is hereby awakened to consciousness of the factors [that have to be reckoned with] in the determination of its principles" (CPR A423-4/B451-2).

One can see in Kant's sceptical method a precursor to Hegel's own appropriation of elements of scepticism into his dialectical method which also aims at certainty and places Reason in a mediating role through which it will become aware of its errors, and Hegel is happy to highlight Kant's contribution:

"In the perspective of the older metaphysics it was assumed that, where cognition falls into contradictions, this is just an accidental aberration and rests on a subjective error in inferring and arguing. For Kant, on the contrary, it lies in the very nature of thinking to lapse into contradictions ("antinomies") when it aims at cognition of the infinite...we have mentioned that the pointing out of the antinomies should be regarded as a very important advance for philosophical cognition, because in that way the rigid dogmatism of the metaphysics of the understanding is set aside and attention is directed to the dialectical movement of thinking" (EL §48Z, p.93).

So while Kant obviously moves beyond scepticism with the antinomies and his sceptical method, insofar as he attempts to account for or explicate the source of such contradiction for the sake of certainty, it should be clear that the source identified – reason as the faculty of the unconditioned – is just what we are faced with in the form of self-consciousness called Scepticism in the *Phenomenology*. There scepticism becomes conscious that it is itself "thinking, or is in its own self infinite" (PS 202, p123) and it is this awareness that permits the realisation that the ground of the determination of a given object is constituted in its relation to others, such that if taken independently of the others it appears that its ground cannot be demonstrated and is non-evident. That is to say, a demand to surpass each individual ground toward a totality or ground of grounds implicitly arises, a demand which, for both scepticism and Kant alike is not to be met in experience. So it seems that thought will necessarily fall into antinomy.

This brings to light the second basic point of similarity, that Reason or thought so construed, in both cases is negative. In scepticism the infinitude of thought reduces every other to a non-independent or unessential difference of self-consciousness in a

bid to secure its own self-certainty. It simply destroys any and every candidate for truth. For Kant, Reason is restricted to being employed regulatively, not constitutively, and we come to see the necessity of its lapsing into antinomy, though such antinomy is never to be completely escaped through any such awareness. According to Hegel, Kant's

"exclusive reduction of reason to abstract identity directly involves the renunciation of its unconditionedness, so that reason is in fact nothing but empty understanding ... For Kant ... the activity of reason expressly consists only in systematising the material furnished by perception, through the application of the categories, i.e., it consists in bringing that material into an external order, and hence its principle is merely that of noncontradiction."  
(EL §52Z, p.100).

So, whereas in scepticism the recognition of the role of thought or Reason in delimiting that which was apparently other than itself lead to that other being viewed as unessential, merely a difference of self-consciousness, with Kant this delimiting role is given a purely regulative, non-constitutive status: "'reason' provides nothing but the *formal unity* for the simplification and systematisation of experiences; it is a *canon*, not an *organon of truth*" (EL §52, p.100). In the former position then Reason's delimiting role is recognised and in the latter it is explored and characterised, but in neither position is it, for Hegel, given its due<sup>103</sup>.

As we would expect, there is a sense in which Critical philosophy as immediate Reason, by incorporating aspects of the positions (scepticism included) passed through in B., loses sight of these positions – aspects of those positions are

<sup>103</sup> C.f. EL §48, pp. 91/92: "This thought, that the contradiction which is posited by the determinations of the understanding in what is rational is *essential* and *necessary* has to be considered one of the most important and profound advances of the philosophy of modern times. But the solution is as trivial as the viewpoint is profound: it consists merely in a tenderness for the things of this world. The stain of contradiction ought not to be in the essence of what is in the world; it has to belong *only* to thinking reason, to the *essence* of the *spirit*. It is not considered at all objectionable that the world *as it appears* shows contradictions to the spirit that observes it: the way the world is for ... *sensibility*, and for the *understanding*, is the world as it appears. But when the *essence* of what is in the world is compared with the *essence* of spirit, it may surprise us to see how naively the humble affirmation has been advanced, and repeated, that what is inwardly contradictory is not the essence of the world, but belongs to reason, the thinking essence. It does not help at all to express this by saying that reason *only* falls into contradiction through the *application of the categories*. For it is also asserted that this application is *necessary*, and that for the purpose of cognition, reason has no determinations other than the categories." Also EL §48Z, p. 93: "it must be noted that... Kant stopped at the merely negative result (that how things are in-themselves is unknowable), and did not penetrate to the cognition of the true and positive significance of the antinomies. This true and positive significance (expressed generally) is that everything actual contains opposed determinations within it, and in consequence the cognition and ... the comprehension of an object amounts precisely to our becoming conscious of it as a concrete unity of opposed determinations".

now implicit in Immediate Reason but are no longer explicit. That is, at least insofar as it comes on the scene immediately, only as the certainty of being ‘I am I’, without demonstrating its provenance. In that sense it manages to retain a positive relation to its other while the experience of consciousness in virtue of which it achieves this relation (such as the forms of scepticism and the unhappy consciousness) become sedimented and lost, forming the strata upon which Critical philosophy as immediate Reason rests, but which it fails to adequately mine. This relation, which accounts for Hegel’s claim that Critical philosophy as immediate Reason does ‘not comprehend its own self’ and is ‘pure assertion’, provides the key to understanding the underlying rationale of Hegel’s earlier identification in the theses presented in advance of his 1801 *Dissertation* of Critical philosophy as an imperfect form of scepticism. This identification, we have noted, may at first seem at odds with the identification and discussion in C.(AA.) of the *Phenomenology*, however, when we consider the blinkered aspect of Critical Philosophy as immediate Reason we will see that this is not the case.

In expanding on the position arrived at in C.(AA.) Hegel notes:

“(R)eason is the certainty of being all *reality*. This *in-itself* ... is the first *positivity* in which self-consciousness is *in its own self* explicitly *for itself*, and ‘I’ is therefore only the *pure essentiality* of the existent, or is the simple *category*. The category, which formerly had the meaning of being the essentiality of the existent – and it was *undetermined* whether of the existent as such, or of the existent contrasted with consciousness – is now the essentiality or simple *unity* of the existent only as a reality that thinks ... It is only the one-sided, spurious idealism that lets this unity again come on the scene as consciousness, on one side, confronted by an *in-itself* on the other. But now this category or *simple* unity of self-consciousness and being possesses difference *in-itself* ... The difference therefore *is*, but is perfectly transparent, and a difference that is at the same time none. It appears as a *plurality* of categories. Since idealism proclaims the simple unity of self-consciousness to be all reality, and *immediately* makes it the essence without having grasped it as the absolutely negative essence – only this has negation, determinateness, or difference within it – this second assertion is even more incomprehensible than the first, viz. that in the category there are *differences* or *species* of categories ... since the difference originates in the pure ‘I’, in the pure Understanding itself, it is thereby made explicit that the immediacy,

the making of assertions and [mere] finding of differences, is here given, and we begin to *comprehend*. But to pick up the plurality of categories again in some way or other as a welcome find, taking them, e.g. from the various judgements, and complacently accepting them so, is in fact to be regarded as an outrage on Science. Where else should the Understanding be able to demonstrate necessity, if it is unable to do so in its own self, which is pure necessity?" (PS 235, pp.142/3).

The basic point is that, given the viewpoint of the rational consciousness as the category, as the simple unity of self-consciousness and being arrived at by this juncture, then (a.) it is incorrect to posit a further in-itself beyond or over against this unity, and (b.) while the category appears as a plurality of categories (as it possesses difference in itself) to take these categories from some external source, like the forms of judgement (rather than comprehending their origination in the category), is to be in error. Given Hegel's demonstration up to this point, (a.) and its relevance to the blinkered aspect of Critical philosophy as immediate Reason ought to be relatively straightforward; (b.) however, is a different matter. We need to see more clearly precisely what this criticism amounts to here.

Before expanding on this criticism however, it should be noted that it is, perhaps, surprising to receive such a specific criticism of a recognizably Kantian procedure at this point. It is by no means out of place given its location and the general topic of discussion in this section, but this alone is not sufficient to explain why *this* particular criticism is chosen and highlighted instead of, say, a more detailed, larger scale discussion of Kant's philosophical procedures, such as that which we receive in the *Encyclopaedia*. Is this particular procedural error supposed to stand as symptomatic of a more widespread problem in Critical Philosophy in general? I believe that it is and that the nature of this problem can be brought out when placed against the backdrop of the philosophical debate surrounding scepticism that preceded the writing of the *Phenomenology* and occasioned Hegel's analysis of scepticism in the *Relation* essay.

If we now turn to the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, we can see there a more perspicuous statement of the initial criticism:

"We are all well aware that Kant's philosophy took the easy way in its *finding* of the categories. "I", the unity of self-consciousness, is totally

abstract and completely undetermined. So how are we to arrive at the determinations of the I, or at the categories? Fortunately, we can find the *various kinds of judgement* already specified empirically in the traditional logic. To judge, however, is to think a determinate object. So, the various modes of judgement that have already been enumerated give us the various *determinations of thinking*. – It remains the profound and enduring merit of *Fichte's* philosophy to have reminded us that the *thought-determinations* must be exhibited in their *necessity*, and that it is essential for them to be *deduced*. – Fichte's philosophy ought to have had at least this effect upon the method of presenting a treatise on logic: that the thought-determinations in general, or the usual logical material, the species of concepts, judgements, and syllogisms, are no longer just taken from observation and thus apprehended only empirically, but are deduced from thinking itself. If thinking has to be able to prove anything at all, if logic must require that proofs are given, and if it wants to teach us how to prove [something], then it must above all be capable of proving its very own peculiar content, and able to gain insight into the necessity of this content." (EL §42, p.84)<sup>104</sup>.

Hegel here summarises the procedure adopted by Kant to determine the various categories in the 'transcendental logic' of his first *Critique*, which, in essence, is to derive them from the kinds of judgement specified by traditional (i.e. classical) logic<sup>105</sup>. As Hegel notes the original criticism comes from Fichte who maintains that following a procedure like Kant's will only result in one having "no way to confirm that the laws of thought" postulated "actually are laws of thought and that they are really nothing else but the immanent laws of the intellect"<sup>106</sup>. The concern expressed is that this procedure does not rest on appropriate grounds insofar as it depends upon the principles and laws of traditional logic which, as Fichte himself notes are simply abstracted from our experience of objects<sup>107</sup>. The acceptance of such laws and

<sup>104</sup> C.f. "Kant ... accepts the categories in an empiric way, without thinking of developing of necessity these differences from unity. Just as little did Kant attempt to deduce time and space, for he accepted them likewise from experience – a quite unphilosophical and unjustifiable procedure." (LHP, Vol. 3, p.439).

<sup>105</sup> That is to say, Hegel gives what we might call a strong reading of Kant's claims in the metaphysical deduction (see 'The Clue to the Discovery of All Pure Concepts of the Understanding', CPR A66-83/B91-115). This was the standard interpretation of Hegel's time and involves reading Kant as intending to prove here that these categories must be the pure concepts of the understanding, and there are no others. However, a more modest reading is defensible, in which Kant is seen as assuming the categories as being the most basic concepts we have and as simply showing that they correspond to the Aristotelian forms of judgement as preparation for establishing them later as the pure concepts of the understanding. See G. Bird, 1962, Ch 7.

<sup>106</sup> J. G. Fichte 1994, p.28.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, pp.27-8.



principles is not such that it could serve as a basis for confirming Kant's categories as *the* laws of thought.

Hegel arguably takes such criticism of Kant's procedures further, questioning whether the very acceptance of the laws and principles of traditional logic in Kant does not leave Kant's thought open to a sceptical threat. The issue is really one of demonstrability. That is to say, if the necessity of the laws and principles of traditional logic cannot be exhibited, then acceptance of them may well appear arbitrary and the sceptical mode of hypothesis may be called into play or an alternate set of laws or principles equipoised to the existing set. Kant does discuss the nature, scope and objects of logic in general (CPR A50/B74-A62/B86) and holds that 'pure logic' "is a body of demonstrated doctrine, and everything in it must be certain entirely *a priori*" (CPR A54/B78). However, he does not seem to question or investigate the validity of the basic laws and principles of such logic – ultimately the basic laws and principles of the Understanding. He discusses some of the "technical distinctions ordinarily recognised by logicians" (CPR A71/B96) when outlining the division of the 'table of judgements', but the division itself does not essentially depart from these distinctions and this division provides the blueprint, so to speak, for the distinctions of the 'table of categories'. Beyond this Kant does not seem to carry out any critical epistemological investigation into the generally accepted laws or principles of traditional logic. So, for Hegel, insofar as Kant fails to demonstrate the necessity of the laws and principles of such logic his position remains incomplete and open to sceptical attack<sup>108</sup>.

This cashes out, in essence, to the more general criticism that Kant fails to be sceptical enough in his procedures. In the *Encyclopaedia Logic* this applies also to his 'sceptical method' (CPR A423-4/B451-2) in the antinomies:

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<sup>108</sup> Obviously such a criticism involves the rather contentious idea that the laws and principles of traditional logic are open to attack from genuine scepticism, and while the issue of the veracity of such a claim is a large one which cannot be satisfactorily addressed here, a few words should be said regarding it. M. Forster (1989, note 49, pp.193-7) has noted the influence of the lesser known figure of C.G. Bardili on Hegel in respect of this issue, pointing out that Bardili takes Kant to task for a complacency regarding logical principles, which Bardili claims is based on the inaccurate assumption that such principles have not been subjected to sceptical attack. Forster highlights that "as a matter of history" (p.195) the classical laws of logic have been subjected to sceptical attack, citing Cicero's *Academica* (II 95-8) as an example in which "among other things the Academic sceptic calls into question the law of the excluded middle by means of a version of the Liar Paradox" (ibid.). He goes on to discuss several more recent suggestions made by philosophers to abandon various laws of logic, which he believes might be employed by a sceptic to induce *epochē*. From Forster's evidence it certainly that a case can be made in support of the claim that the laws of traditional logic are open to attack from ancient scepticism, and that they have received scant epistemological securing since Aristotle.

“...Kant brings forward only *four* antinomies. He arrived at them by presupposing the table of the categories just as he did in the case of the so-called paralogisms. While doing this he followed the procedure, which became so popular afterwards, of simply subsuming the determinations of an object under a ready-made *schema*, instead of deducing them from the Concept ... – the main point that has to be made is that antinomy is found not only in the four particular objects taken from cosmology, but rather in *all* objects of all kinds, in *all* representations, concepts, and ideas.” (EL §48, p.92)

This latter point is apprehended by self-consciousness as Scepticism in the *Phenomenology*, which “comes to know itself in the many and varied forms of life as a real negativity” (PS 202, p.123), but it is lost in the immediacy of the idealism of Critical philosophy that “proclaims the simple unity of self-consciousness to be all reality, and immediately makes it the essence without having grasped it as the absolutely negative essence” (PS 235, p.142). This failure to be sufficiently sceptical accounts for the sense in which Hegel thinks that Critical philosophy is an ‘imperfect form of scepticism’ in a general fashion, as well as his statement in the *Phenomenology* that it is “a pure assertion which does not comprehend its own self” (PS234, p.141). Critical philosophy’s procedures are not sceptical enough and while resulting from them, they partially forsake the hard won lessons learnt by self-consciousness in its experience as scepticism.

There is, however, a more specific implication to this criticism. We have noted that Hegel’s concern in this is with demonstrability in light of the sceptical threat, and we understand, given Hegel’s analysis of it, the nature of the scepticism constituting that threat. This, however, is not the scepticism found in Schulze’s *Aenesidemus*, which holds to two fundamental principles: “1. (Actual Fact): There are representations in us with certain characteristics, some of which differ while others agree. 2. (Rule of Judgement): The touchstone of all that is true is general logic, and every reasoning about matters of fact can lay claim to correctness only to the extent it conforms to the laws of logic”<sup>109</sup>. Aside from Fichte’s unmasking of Schulze’s scepticism as a form of dogmatism in his review<sup>110</sup>, it should be clear that the essence

<sup>109</sup> As quoted by Fichte in his *Review of Aenesidemus*, in G. D. Giovanni & H. S. Harris (trans. & eds.) 2000, p.138.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.* p.149.

of Hegel's worry would equally well apply to Schulzian scepticism as to Kantian Idealism. And although Fichte is, himself, cited in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* for highlighting the initial procedural concern with Kant's derivation of the categories (where he is not in the *Phenomenology*), he does not escape all castigation under the further implication of this worry. The implication is that a philosophical system which demonstrates the necessity of its content on the basis of an absolute principle, concept or identity, must also demonstrate the validity of that absolute principle, identity etc. if it is to escape sceptical attack. That is, it must start, like scepticism, here and now, from a point of non-assertion, and work up to such a principle<sup>111</sup>. Fichte succumbs to this insofar as there is something beyond or over against the unity of the simple category in his thought. His idealism is of the type that Hegel claims starts from the unity of apperception but fails to correctly derive or demonstrate this unity, instead it asserts "I am I", that all things are sensations or ideas, but it fails to properly demonstrate this and hence its assertion remains without substantive content. Accordingly, it requires an "extraneous impulse, in which first is to be found the multiplicity of sensations and ideas" (PS 238, p.144) in order to fill out its empty assertion with content. The result is that instead of being absolute, the immediate certainty of "I am I" retains an opposition and it is no great matter to Hegel whether this opposed thing is labelled 'an extraneous impulse' – Fichte's *Anstoß* – or 'the Thing-in-itself' – Kant's *Ding an sich* (see PS 238, p.145). Furthermore, Fichte remains true to the Kantian strictures on knowledge, treating his 'absolute ego' as a 'regulative' rather than a 'constitutive' principle, and in this respect he also fails to demonstrate "that forgotten path" along which Reason's assertion of being all reality "is comprehended" (PS 233, p.141).

The general implications of this procedural worry for Hegel's own system should be obvious enough insofar as the *Phenomenology* is to constitute a forepiece to the *Encyclopaedia*, a preparation of sorts, for the standpoint of philosophical science, and we will discuss some of these implications in relation to our hypothesis that the

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<sup>111</sup> I take it that this concern with demonstrability strongly informs the *Phenomenology's* general strategy regarding genuine scepticism, which broadly stated is to work up to the Absolute through the series of inadequate forms of consciousness. In tracing the progression through the series, grounds for doubting each form of consciousness's conception of reality arise from within each form, i.e. from each form's unquestioned presuppositions, and the progression (which includes scepticism as a form of consciousness) is shown to lead to a point of completion at which no more doubts are generated. After this point the sceptic would have to provide new grounds not encompassed in the progression to raise any legitimate doubt; the onus is very much placed on the sceptic through the demonstration of the progression.

admissibility of the syllogism uniting thought and being is, in principle, established by C.(AA.) in the next chapter. It remains to be noted that a philosophically educated reader contemporaneous to Hegel would have been familiar with the debates regarding Schulze's response to Kant and Reinhold, and the wider implication of Hegel's procedural worry for Critical philosophy generally and Schulze's scepticism would not be lost on such a reader – even though it, at first, apparently aims only at Kant.

The sense of Hegel's 1801 identification of Critical philosophy and Scepticism in the prefatory theses of his *Dissertation* is not then lost in the identification made in the *Phenomenology*. Rather what we come to see is that while Critical Philosophy must represent an advance on scepticism insofar as it bears a positive relation to its other, it fails to properly investigate and demonstrate the grounds on which it rests, due, in a large part to its preoccupation with determining the nature of the sceptical attacks of the likes of Schulze, rather than with the threat of what Hegel calls 'authentic' or 'true ancient scepticism'. Indeed, such preoccupation and the failure of Critical philosophy to adequately investigate and demonstrate its grounds is the condition of Hegel's own advance on the philosophies of its key figures such as Kant and Fichte, which essentially consists in the clear exhibition of these grounds and the necessity of their development. While, for Hegel, Critical philosophy is possible only once the fixed, viewpoint of the Understanding has been overcome and a resolution or reconciliation of thought and being has been achieved, it exhibits the type of fixity of thought demonstrated by the Understanding, as a result of its immediacy, which translates to its failure to be sufficiently sceptical (indeed, what else is such fixity of thought to amount to if not a willingness to simply accept the 'abstract form' as 'ready-made', or given), or better, to apprehend clearly the relation of scepticism to philosophy.

### **Chapter Three: Proof & Expectations**

We have, up to this point, mainly concerned ourselves with establishing, and presenting *prima facie* evidence in support of the hypothesis regarding the opening transitions of the *Phenomenology* that we outlined at the beginning, viz. that the transitions attempt to show, in principle, the admissibility of the two ways for the unification of thought and being. In the first chapter the general schematic course of this attempt was traced, with focus being placed upon the shift in consciousness's starting point at the end of section A.. In the second chapter Hegel's deep preoccupation with the 'authentic' or 'true' nature of scepticism and his perception of Critical philosophy's failure to identify and concern itself with this scepticism was highlighted. The connection between the two, at first sight, perhaps disparate seeming topics, was provided in terms of Hegel's concern with demonstrability in the face of the 'authentic' sceptic's challenge, that is to say, his concern that the validity of a grounding principle, concept, or identity of a philosophical system must be demonstrated – something which he thought Critical philosophy failed to achieve. In this sense it appears that Hegel's interpretation of scepticism closely informs his reaction to Critical philosophy and that this in turn effects his own project in the *Phenomenology*, in so far as it is to avoid such a failure in demonstrating the admissibility of the two ways for the unification of thought and being as God or the Absolute, as preparatory for Hegel's larger system.

I take it that by now the initial hypothesis regarding the opening transitions of the *Phenomenology* has been shown to be viable, or at least not without merit as an interpretative hypothesis. However, we have not yet discussed the inner workings of the demonstration putatively given there, in regard to Hegel's general concerns with the demonstrability of a system's grounding principle and the shortcomings of Critical philosophy. In the main, we have spoken in quite general terms where the unification of thought and being are concerned, and while we have the general schematic outline of Hegel's demonstration, the details of its nature as a proof remain, by and large, indistinct. It is these factors that I primarily wish to address in this chapter, providing a clearer model of the sense in which Hegel's putative demonstration acts as a proof.

We will then, first of all, go back to Hegel's two ways and bring out the nature of the proof they are to constitute (sections 1. and 2.). We should then be able to

derive expectations that such a proof would have to meet, in order to see whether the demonstration of the *Phenomenology* does in fact meet these expectations (sections 3. and 4.).

### 1. Hegel's 'two ways' & Kant's 'two paths'.

If we return to the days of Hegel's collaboration with Schelling in the *Kritisches Journal*, we find the following statement of the philosophical task of the moment as they saw it:

"to put God back again at the peak of philosophy, absolutely prior to all else as the one and only ground of everything, the unique *principium essendi* and *cognoscendi*, after all this time in which he has been put *beside* other finite things, or put off right to the end as a postulate that springs from an absolute finitude." (OHU p.100/p.299)<sup>112</sup>

This, perhaps more Schellingian than Hegelian, statement of the *principium essendi* of philosophy is preceded by a summary of the way in which the 'common understanding' takes such a *principium*:

"The common understanding posits the Absolute on exactly the same level with the finite, and extends the range of requirements that are made in respect of the finite to the Absolute. Thus it is required in philosophy, that nothing shall be established without proof; the common understanding at once discovers the inconsistency that has been committed, it sees that the Absolute has not been proved; the being of the Absolute is posited immediately with its Idea, but the common understanding is quite up to objecting that we can very easily think of something, form an Idea of something, without there being any necessity on that account that the thing we have thought of should straightaway have any existence; and so on" (OHU pp.97-8/p.298).

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<sup>112</sup>*Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*, I, no. 1 (1802), pp. 91-115. Translated as 'How the Ordinary Human Understanding Takes Philosophy (as displayed in the works of Mr. Krug)' in G. D. Giovanni and H. S. Harris (eds) 2000, pp. 292-310. Henceforth the text will be referred to by the abbreviation 'OHU' followed by the original page reference and then the translation page reference.

Here, at this stage in the development of Hegel's thought, the image of this understanding as hypostatising the Absolute, treating it as a finite thing subject to the requirements made in respect of such things, is obviously present, along with an insistence, on his own behalf, not to accept this treatment of such a *principium*. To put God or the Absolute back again at the peak of philosophy, something would have to be produced against this hypostatisation. Precisely what, Schelling and Hegel were to disagree about once Schelling moved away from Jena in 1803, and Hegel himself went through a process of working on and rejecting a number of formulations<sup>113</sup> before producing the *Phenomenology*, that in part, is to meet this task.

What concerns us here, however, is the theoretical notion of God or the Absolute that is to be put back as 'the one and only ground of everything, the unique *principium essendi*'. As such a ground and equally as something that the common understanding posits 'on exactly the same level as the finite' this bears close resemblance to Kant's 'Ideal of Pure Reason'<sup>114</sup>, which constitutes, Kant claims, the nucleus of our notion of God. This ideal represents "something that may afford the understanding a sufficient foundation for the complete determination of its concepts" (CPR A583/B611). It is, as ideal, an archetype from which all things derive the material of their possibility and of which they are imperfect copies (CPR A578/B606); it is the idea of all reality and the highest reality, the object of which is then at once the primordial and highest being, the being of all beings, the ground of all things (CPR A579/B607). Hypostatized the concept of such a being becomes the concept of God<sup>115</sup>.

Kant's own discussion of the Ideal of Reason aims at explaining the origin of the concept of God in the Ideal. Naturally, Kant claims, that we are not straightforwardly persuaded that such a concept, "a mere creature of" our "own thought is a real being". rather we find that reason is "much too easily conscious of the ideal and merely fictitious character of such a presupposition" to allow this (CPR

<sup>113</sup> Harris reports that initially, when still closely allied to Schelling's Identity Philosophy, Hegel envisaged a presentation of his thought in a two part system comprised of a critical logic designed to expose our fixed, finite concepts to the infinity of speculative Reason, followed by a speculative logic starting with the concept of God and a reinstatement of the Ontological argument. (See G. D. Giovanni and H. S. Harris eds, 2000, pp. 265-268). Later, Hegel produced works such as *The Jena Logic and Metaphysics* (see *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. VII).

<sup>114</sup> See CPR A568/B596-A583/B611.

<sup>115</sup> Of course, this is not to suggest that the viewpoint of the 'common understanding' in the above quote is supposed to be indicative of Kant's view – Hegel's target here is Krug, someone he takes to be far less sophisticated than Kant.

A583/B611-A584/B612). We are, however, impelled from another direction by the regress of the conditioned. This regress starts not from concepts but from experience. Once we admit something as existing, Kant argues, we must also admit that something exists necessarily because any contingent thing exists only on the basis of another contingent thing as its cause, and so forth until we reach a non-contingent cause or, in other words, something which is unconditionally necessary – “(T)his is the argument upon which reason bases its adherence to the primordial being” (CPR A584/B612). Once this stage is reached reason begins to search amongst its concepts for the one that best matches such a mode of existence as that of unconditioned necessity, one that is not incompatible with it. The procedure adopted, Kant claims, is to look for the concept of that “which is independent of any condition” and it is found

“in that which is itself the sufficient condition of all else, that is, in that which contains all reality. But that which is all-containing and without limits is absolute unity, and involves the concept of a single being that is likewise the supreme being. Accordingly, we conclude that the supreme being, as primordial ground of all things, must exhibit absolute necessity” (CPR A587/B615)

The idea of the primordial ground of all things then, is hypostatized and identified with that which must be unconditionally necessary; it is at once something transcendent and yet real.

From the outset Kant believes that such an argument fails to provide us with “the least concept of the properties of a necessary being and indeed is utterly ineffective” (CPR A588/B616) – even though we may be led by ‘the natural bent of the understanding’ to adopt it (CPR A590/B618) – as the concept of a limited being which does not have the highest reality is not strictly incompatible with absolute necessity, even if we cannot infer this necessity from the concept we have of that being. While such a limited being is not unconditioned we are not, according to Kant, for that reason, justified in concluding that its existence must be conditioned. Indeed, the issue of whether it has conditioned or unconditioned existence is outside of our purview.

Kant goes on to identify three kinds of proofs for the existence of God. The first, that begins from “determinate experience and the specific constitution of the



world of sense as thereby known, and ascends from it in accordance with the laws of causality, to the supreme cause outside the world” (CPR A590/B618), is the physico-theological proof; the second, that begins “from experience which is purely indeterminate, that is, from experience of existence in general” (*Ibid.*), is the cosmological proof; and the third, that abstracts “from all experience” and argues “completely *a priori*, from mere concepts, to the existence of a supreme cause” (A591/B619), is the ontological proof. Kant views these familiar arguments as being closely related, in so far as there are ‘two paths’ along which they are to be found (A591/B619): one transcendental (the ontological proof) and the other empirical (the physico-theological and cosmological proofs), the latter, in reason’s development, leading to the former. For Kant, if his objections to the ontological proof cannot be overcome then the other proofs cannot stand either: the cosmological proof appeals to the ontological one, and the physico-theological proof appeals to the cosmological one, thereby ultimately resting on the ontological proof (CPR A592/B620-A631/B659).

Given what has already been said regarding the transitions from A. to C.(AA.) in the *Phenomenology*, it should come as no surprise that these ‘two paths’ along which reason develops, seem aligned to the ‘two ways’ putatively traced in the trajectory of those transitions, the first of which is to “begin with *being* and pass on from there to the *abstraction of thinking*” and the second of which is to trace the “passage from *abstraction* to *being*” (EL §50, p.94). In fact, there should be no surprise when we take into account that Hegel’s outlining of these ‘two ways’ in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* is situated in the context of a discussion of Kant’s Transcendental Dialectic, and more specifically, in a discussion of the Ideal of Reason. We should then be able to use the details of Hegel’s reaction to Kant’s objections to the proofs which develop on these paths, to discern expectations regarding Hegel’s putative demonstration of their ultimate admissibility.

Now, one expectation that immediately arises is that, in sequential terms, Hegel’s trajectory in these opening transitions of the *Phenomenology* should mimic Kant’s outline of the relation of the two paths along which the proofs are found. In his own presentation of his objections Kant states:

“(A)s regards the order in which these arguments should be dealt with , it will be exactly the reverse of that which reason takes in the progress of its

own development ... For it will be shown that, although experience is what first gives occasion to this enquiry, it is the *transcendental concept* which in all such endeavours marks out the goal that reason has set itself to attain, and which is indeed its sole guide in its efforts to achieve that goal” (CPR A591/B619)

Hegel will not trace the trajectory in reverse, starting with the transcendental path, but rather will re-trace the development as it progresses, displaying what he takes to be its true form and import.

So, one might, at least minimally, expect that this re-tracing begin in the *Phenomenology* with the starting point of the empirical path. The expectation then would be to start from “determinate experience of the things of the present world, and the constitution and order of these” (CPR A620/B648), and to move through to the ‘transcendental concept’. Before we look back at the general schematic course of Hegel’s putative presentation of the admissibility of the two methods for the unification of thought and being, that we have already outlined, in order to see whether this expectation is fulfilled, and if so, in what way, we should first return to Hegel’s analysis of the objections to the proofs and his comments against these objections in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*. A closer consideration of these comments will yield up a more detailed picture of the key points that such a presentation should establish.

## 2. The Proofs of God’s Existence: Critique & The Form of Judgement

My overall strategy here is one of attempting to derive expectations regarding the putative presentation of the *Phenomenology* from the condensed comments of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, in order to see whether the presentation does meet these expectations. If the expectations are met, then our interpretive hypothesis is supported. A disadvantage of adopting this strategy is that the *Encyclopaedia Logic* is, at points, very oblique in its statements regarding the ‘two ways’ and the various proofs. There are however, further texts, whose comments correspond, in part, to the content of this section of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, that can be drawn on to further elucidate that content: Hegel’s 1827 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*<sup>116</sup> and his

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<sup>116</sup> G. W. F. Hegel 1984, particularly pp. 414-41. Hereafter this text will be referred to by the abbreviation LPR followed by the relevant page number.

*Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*<sup>117</sup>. Hegel's argument in these texts regarding the proofs of God is largely the same as that presented in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, though the presentation is more perspicuous, and so is of at least equal use in generating expectations of the *Phenomenology's* putative presentation.

Hegel understands the main objection raised against all such proofs to be that they are a syllogising from one being to another diverse being:

"As far as beginning with being is concerned, this being, as what is immediate, presents itself as determined as an infinite manifold, as a world in all its fullness. This world can be determined more precisely as a collection of whatever infinitely many contingencies [there are] (in the *cosmological* proof); or as a collection of infinitely many *purposes* and *purposive* relationships (in the *physico-theological* proof). – Thinking of this fullness of being means stripping it of the form of the singularities and contingencies, and grasping it as a universal being, necessary in and for itself, one that is self-determining and active in accordance with universal purposes, one that is diverse from that contingent and singular collection: [i.e.,] grasping it as *God*. – The critique of this procedure is directed mainly against its being a syllogising, a passage [from one being to another]. As such and in themselves, our *perceptions*, and their aggregate "the world", do not show the universality that results from the purification of that content by thinking; so this universality is not justified by that empirical notion of the world" ... "The *other way of unification*, through which the *Ideal* is to be established, starts from the *abstraction of thinking* and goes on to the determination for which *being* alone remains ... What the understanding sets against this second way is in-itself the same as was alleged before, namely that, just as the universal is not found to be present in the empirical, so, conversely, the determinate is not contained in the universal – and the determinate here is "being". In other words "being" cannot be deduced from the concept or analysed out of it" (EL §50/51, pp. 94-5/98)

The perceived problem with the kind of syllogising which is involved in the proofs seems to be then, that the move from the starting-point to the end-point appears illegitimate; it is a 'passage from one being to another' in which the result (the end-point) is not supported by or justified on the basis of the starting point. This is not,

<sup>117</sup> G. W. F. Hegel 1974, pp. 155-367. Hereafter this text will be referred to by the abbreviation LPEG followed by the relevant lecture number and page reference.

however, a very perspicuous statement. It seems to amount to the claim that the syllogisms of the proofs of God are improperly formed, though the specific details in each case remain vague. If we start from sensible experience (in the case of the physico-theological and cosmological proofs) and attempt to move to the existence of God, it seems that the path is blocked, in some sense, because our concept of God cannot be justified on the ground of that experience alone – that is, we do not find God presented *a posteriori*, as the highest being, as the absolutely necessary being and creator of the world. He is not to be found presented immediately in that experience. Hegel does not, at this point, provide us with too much more here by stating that the “universal is not to be found present in the empirical” (Ibid.)<sup>118</sup>. While he cannot be objecting generally to inference from empirical experience to the unexperienced, it remains to be seen precisely what he has in mind here.

What is clear at this point however, is that accepting such formally improper syllogisms would seem to involve an acceptance of illusory inferential connections that are invalid, or to put it another way, a non-critical jump or leap to the conclusion which leaves behind any connections to the premisses. This is not generally dissimilar to the Kantian perspective on the matter in which the result of such proofs – that God exists – failing to be established by the proofs, will only be accepted because we are ignorant of such a jump or under the illusion of the connections.

Indeed, as we’ve noted, in his analysis of the cosmological proof Kant argues that even if we allow inference to the existence of an absolutely necessary being, there is nothing standing in the way of a limited being, which does not have the highest reality, being absolutely necessary; there is no incompatibility between absolute necessity and limited or conditioned being. To secure the proof we would need to know that the highest being alone is absolutely necessary, that is, the concept of such a being would have to contain the concept of a necessarily existing being and so the proof is pushed back onto the ontological proof, this being the true ground of the proof. Supporters of such a proof jump straight beyond such a lack of incompatibility, accordingly they fail to see the proof’s reliance on the ontological proof<sup>119</sup>, and furthermore in the proof “lies hidden a whole nest of dialectical assumptions” (CPR

<sup>118</sup> We will come to appreciate just what Hegel means by putting matters in these terms later in the section when we come to see how Hegel views the relation of the shortcomings of pre-Kantian metaphysics and Empiricism to Critical philosophy.

<sup>119</sup> For Kant, such a proof “is guilty of an *ignoratio elenchi*. It professes to lead us by a new path, but after a short circuit brings us back to the very path which we had deserted at its bidding” (CPR A609/B637).

A609/B637) which involve the overstepping of several of Kant's critical conditions for knowledge. A similar outcome occurs in the case of the physico-theological proof, where an object adequate to our concept of God is not to be found in our experience of the empirical world and nothing determinate is discovered about the cause or author of the apparent order of this world, instead the proof must jump again to the ontological one (via the cosmological proof this time) in its attempt to establish God's existence.

Hegel's rather oblique statement then, of what he takes to be the main objection against such proofs, though highly generalised, is far from inaccurate and this objection is equally evident in Kant's comments regarding the ontological proof. Kant claims that while the concept of God as the *ens realissimum* includes existence, this does not of itself, it is claimed, banish the question as to whether or not an object corresponding to this concept actually exists. Kant argues that existence as a predicate attaches nothing new to a concept and so our concept of God expresses mere possibility and cannot be said to express reality without the identification of possible *a posteriori* knowledge of this object (God). Such an identification is not to be made amongst the contents of sensible experience<sup>120</sup> or to use the Hegelian gloss on it "the determinate is not contained in the universal – and the determinate here is 'being'. In other words 'being' cannot be deduced from the concept or analysed out of it" (EL §51, p.98). Once more it seems that the syllogism is improperly formed such that were the movement to be completed it would involve a non-critical jump to the conclusion, a plucking of God's existence from his concept – existence as present in sensible experience, existence as experienced, in which a relation between a concept and an object of the senses is expressed, is not what is involved in the concept of God as the *ens realissimum* in the ontological proof, where the existence involved expresses a relation between a concept and an object of thought.

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<sup>120</sup> "Were we dealing with an object of the senses, we could not confound the existence of the thing with the mere concept of it. For through the concept the object is thought only as conforming to the *universal conditions* of possible empirical knowledge in general, whereas through its existence it is thought as belonging to the context of experience as a whole. In being thus connected with the *content* of experience as a whole, the concept of the object is not, however, in the least enlarged; all that has happened is that our thought has thereby obtained an additional possible perception. It is not, therefore, surprising that, if we attempt to think existence through the pure category alone, we cannot specify a single mark distinguishing it from mere possibility. Whatever, therefore, and however much, our concept of an object may contain, we must go outside it, if we are to ascribe existence to the object. In the case of objects of the senses, this takes place through their connection with some one of our perceptions, in accordance with empirical laws. But in dealing with objects of pure thought, we have no means whatsoever of knowing their existence, since it would have to be known in a completely *a priori* manner. Our consciousness of all existence ... belongs exclusively to the unity of experience; any [alleged] existence outside this field, while not indeed such as we can declare to be absolutely impossible, is of the nature of an assumption which we can never be in a position to justify". (CPR A600-1/B628-9).

As syllogisms then, the proofs of God's existence are seen to be formally improper. But as we will see, Hegel believes that this appearance of formal impropriety, far from invalidating the content of the proofs, highlights a philosophical error carried through from the older metaphysics, in which such proofs were championed, to the Critical philosophy inaugurated by Kant, that subjected such proofs to forceful criticism. The error itself can be expressed most generally as a lack of rigour, or more specifically as an insufficiently critical acceptance of the deliverances of the understanding. We saw in chapter two that Hegel expressed concerns over Kant's putatively uncritical acceptance of the principles of the understanding from traditional logic, and we will see here that the appearance of the formal impropriety of the proofs, in the Kantian analysis, has its source, according to Hegel, in Kant's taking the deliverances of the understanding as paradigmatic of what we ought to require from Reason as the mediating or syllogising faculty. Once such an analysis is corrected, the formal impropriety can be disregarded and the true content apprehended. The correction of such an analysis and the error at its heart will require a reformation of the principles upon which the understanding is based, a more rigorous analysis of the concepts, judgements and syllogisms which constitute the proofs.

Much of this material is already contextually present to the reader by the time (s)he encounters Hegel's comments regarding Kant's critique of the proofs of God's existence in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*. It is laid out in Hegel's discussions of 'metaphysics'<sup>121</sup>, or rather pre-Kantian or pre-Critical metaphysics<sup>122</sup>, and 'empiricism'<sup>123</sup>, not to mention the 'Preface' to the *Phenomenology*<sup>124</sup>, and throughout that text. But to come to an understanding of it in specific relation to the proofs of God's existence, it is best to initially turn away from such sections and to look instead at Hegel's comments on proof or demonstration regarding God's existence<sup>125</sup>, in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*:

<sup>121</sup> See EL §'s 26-36, pp. 65-76.

<sup>122</sup> At EL §27, p. 65: "In its most determinate development, which is also the one closest to us, this way of thinking was the *metaphysics of the recent past*, the way in which it was constituted among us before the Kantian philosophy. It is only in relation to the history of philosophy, however, that this metaphysics *belongs to the past*: for, on its own account, it is always present as the way in which the *mere understanding* views the objects of reason".

<sup>123</sup> See EL §'s 37-9, pp. 76-80.

<sup>124</sup> See particularly PS 58-68, pp. 35-41.

<sup>125</sup> A good discussion (to which I am indebted) of Hegel's notion of proof in relation to the proofs of God's existence, and indeed of Hegel's general thought regarding these proofs can be found in P. M. Calton 2002.

“When we hear the expression “proofs of God’s existence,” it brings in starightaway the possibility that some distortion is involved in it. There is talk of God and his “existence” [*Dasein*]; “existence” is determinate, finite being – and *Existenz*, too, is used in a determinate sense. But God’s being is in no way a limited being. It would be better to say, “God and his being, his actuality or objectivity.” The demonstration has the aim of showing us the coherence between the two determinations [God and being] because they are distinct, not because they are immediately one. Everything is immediate in its relation to itself, God as God, being as being. What is demonstrated is that these initially distinct things also cohere together and are identical – though they do not have an abstract identity, which would be sameness and hence immediacy.

To show coherence means in general to prove. The coherence can be of different kinds, and the proof leaves this difference undefined. For instance there is a coherence that is *wholly external* or mechanical. We can see that a roof is necessary to the walls, because the house has this characteristic protection against weather and the like. The purpose is what links the wall with the roof, and we can therefore say it is proved that a house must have a roof. This is no doubt [logically] coherent, but we are aware at the same time that the coherence of the walls with the roof does not affect the being of these objects. Or again, the fact that wood and tile make up a roof does not concern their being, and is for them a merely external nexus. But there are also [types of] coherence that are *involved in the thing* or the content itself. This is the case, for instance, with geometrical figures. The three angles in a triangle add up to two right angles. That is a necessity of the thing itself, whereas beams and stones are what they are even without being joined together. In the triangle the connection is not of the kind where the coherence is external; in this case, rather the one [term] cannot be without the other, for the second is directly posited along with the first. But the proof that we give for this, or the kind of insight [we have] into this necessity, is distinct from the coherence that the determinations have within the thing itself. The procedure that we follow in demonstration is not a process of the thing itself – it is something other than what is involved in the nature of the thing. We draw auxiliary lines. But it would not occur to anyone to say that, in order to have three angles equal in magnitude to two right angles, a triangle should adopt the procedure of extending one of its sides, and that only by that means would it arrive at this determination. That, by contrast, is the path of our

insight; the mediation through which we pass and the mediation in the thing itself are separate from one another. Construction and proof serve only as an aid to our subjective cognition; they do not constitute the objective mode by which the thing attained this relationship through mediation. It is indeed a subjective necessity, but not the coherence or mediation within the object itself.

With regard to the knowledge of God, to the internal coherence of God's determinations and the coherence of our knowledge of God and of God's determinations, this type of demonstration is directly unsatisfactory on its own account. In this procedure of subjective necessity we start from certain initial definitions that are already familiar to us. There are assumptions or initial conditions, for example that the triangle or the right angle is given. Definite [logical] connections are presupposed, and we then show in proofs of this kind that if there is one determination then the other is, too. That is, we make the result dependent on given specifications already present. What we arrive at is represented as something dependent upon assumptions.

In the application of this model [*Vorstellung*] of demonstration to the formulation [*Vorstellung*] of proofs of God's existence, what appears at once is the inappropriateness of wishing to exhibit a coherence of this kind in the case of God. This appears particularly in the first procedure, which we called the elevation of the finite to God, so that (if we embrace the process within the form of the proof) we have a relationship in which the finite is the foundation from which the being of God is demonstrated. In this [logical] nexus the being of God appears as a consequence, as dependent upon the being of the finite. This is the distortion, that this progression that we call "proving" is unsuited to what we represent to ourselves under [the name] "God" – for God is, of course, precisely the non-derivative, he is utterly actual being in and for itself. But if we now suppose that, by pointing this out, we have shown this procedure as a whole is vacuous, then this, too, is a one-sided view – and one that directly contradicts the universal consciousness of humankind. For what this nexus contains when we strip away that *form* of demonstration is the elevation to God, and the proofs are nothing more than a description of the self-elevation to God. It is because of



the Kantian critique of reason that these proofs of God's existence have been discarded, consigned so to speak to the rubbish heap." (LPR 417-419)<sup>126</sup>.

Here then the suitability of various procedures for proving God's existence are assessed. The essential meaning of a proof is regarded by Hegel to be found in the demonstration of coherence between determinations. It is the showing of initially distinct determinations to cohere in their relation to one another. This coherence, however, can be of different kinds depending on the nature of the relation between its terms. A proof shows coherence but does not necessarily stipulate which kind in contrast to others. This is important in regard to a proof of God's existence, as the coherence here, between the determinations 'God' and 'being', is of a particular kind and the proof to be offered must be sensitive to this kind. Hegel brings out this point and the nature of the coherence involved through his consideration of 'external' or extrinsic coherence and coherence that is 'involved in the thing' or intrinsic coherence.

To illustrate external coherence, Hegel notes that we can form a logically coherent proof which shows that a roof in connection to its walls, is necessary, given the purpose that a house is to fulfill, but that this has nothing to do with the determinations themselves. We can show that 'roof' and 'walls' cohere insofar as the purpose of a house to provide protection against weather, demands that the roof and walls are connected to provide such protection. The coherence here shown is then limited to this purpose of protection against weather; it is only in this respect that the roof and walls are shown to cohere. Such coherence is not intrinsic to roof and walls taken on their account; neither the concept 'roof' nor the concept 'walls', when separated, involves a content that necessitates the connection of one to the other. It is precisely in this sense that Hegel calls the coherence here "wholly external".

Such a coherence would obviously be no good for a proof of God's existence, where the existence to be shown is a feature of the content of the determination 'God'

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<sup>126</sup> C.f. the second lecture of Hegel's *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*, pp. 165-73. Interestingly these lectures open with a statement to the effect that Hegel chose this lecture topic to present due to its intimate connection to the lectures he gave on logic that preceded them in the summer session. He claims that while the most obvious connection between logic and the proofs lies in the *nature* of the proofs, "what is logical does not constitute the merely formal side, but, in fact, occupies the very centre point of the content" of the proofs (pp. 155/6). Hegel is not here talking about traditional logic which would be concerned with the purely formal aspect of the proofs, the 'auxiliary lines' we draw, but the deeper logic involved in the dialectic of the 'elevation of thinking', or the developmental process of the thing itself.

itself. What is required here is a coherence between 'God' and 'being' that is internal to 'God' itself, not an extrinsic, and thereby seemingly contingent, one.

In contrast to this Hegel considers "[types of] coherence that are *involved in the thing* or the content itself" (Ibid.). This type of proof is illustrated by the procedures of geometry used in demonstrating the features of geometrical figures. As an instance, Hegel notes that the proof that the 3 angles in a triangle add up to 2 right-angles is of this kind (LPR p. 418). Unlike the previous connection of roof and walls the coherence between the determinations here is intrinsic to their content. That is to say, if given a triangle, then we are necessarily given a figure whose 3 angles add up to the sum of 2 right-angles. Such coherence, as internal or intrinsic, is universally present in all instances of triangles and not limited to a particular context or purpose.

While it is obvious why Hegel thinks proofs that show only external coherence are wholly unsuitable for demonstrating God's existence, it is less obvious why he thinks proofs like those constructed in geometry, that apparently show coherence intrinsic to the determinations themselves, are unsuitable. The reason is, Hegel argues, that upon further analysis these proofs too involve a certain externality in respect of the determinations.

The proof constructed to show that the 3 angles of a triangle are equal in magnitude to 2 right-angles, we are told, "is distinct from the coherence that the determinations have within the thing itself. The procedure we follow in demonstration is not a process of the thing itself" (Ibid.)<sup>127</sup>. Hegel's point is that the proof constructed, in this case, is our subjective cognition of that in virtue of which the 3 angles of a triangle are equal to 2 right-angles. While the 3 angles of a triangle are shown in the proof to be necessarily equal in magnitude to 2 right-angles, this necessity is based on a number of assumptions. The starting point of the proof will be a given figure: the triangle or right-angle, and the construction of the proof proceeds in accordance with a pre-determined set of basic operations or principles of construction, from which it is shown that "if there is one determination then the other is, too" (Ibid.). The result, the putative internal coherence, is dependent upon the prior assumptions.

The question that Hegel is raising, then, is: 'in what sense the initial given figure and the principles of construction can be said to correspond to the nature of the

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<sup>127</sup>Cf. PS 42, p. 24.

thing to be proved?' If the necessity of the proof is based on assumptions then these assumptions also need to be demonstrated.

If Hegel is correct on these points then the only internal, necessary coherence that such proofs demonstrate belongs to the determinations we employ in accounting for the subject of the proof, and this coherence itself depends upon prior assumptions unrelated to that subject. Consequently, just like the proofs that concern only external coherence, Hegel thinks this type of proof unsuitable for proofs of the existence of God.

The main implication of Hegel's comments here, is that traditional forms of proof are inadequate to the task of demonstrating God's existence for the reasons cited, which is to say that the traditional syllogistic form of proving God's existence is inadequate to the task. The required kind of coherence is not such that it can be shown to follow of necessity given the supposition of other determinations – it cannot be shown to depend on or follow from something else and in this sense should be presuppositionless. An appropriate form of proof then, should display the coherence of determinations on such a way that the coherence can be seen to be truly internal coherence. As such it will not be recognizably syllogistic in the traditional sense, but would consist in tracing the process whereby the determinations come to have the coherence they do have in the thing itself. We might therefore say that paradigm of proof, for Hegel, is that of a self-generative process. What is at the root of the inappropriateness of the traditional forms of proof is precisely that they fail to capture the appropriate kind of coherence or relation between determinations. It seems then that the error, in the first instance, is to be found in the general form of judgement utilised in such proofs, i.e. in the way that they bring one representation into relation with another, or the way that they relate predicate and subject.

If we turn our attention to Hegel's discussion of the old, pre-Kantian metaphysics (which asserted such proofs) in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, we see this confirmed as the source of difficulties in such metaphysics, and we see that the resulting difficulties mirror those encountered in his discussion of proof.

Hegel characterises such metaphysics by claiming that it:

“regarded the thought-determinations as the *fundamental determinations of things* ... First, these determinations, in their abstraction, were taken to be valid on their own account, and capable of being *predicates of what is true*.

In any case, this metaphysics presupposed that cognition of the Absolute could come through the *attaching of predicates to it*; and it investigated neither the peculiar content and validity of the determinations of the understanding, nor yet this form of determining the Absolute by attaching predicates to it.” (EL §28, p.66).

That is to say, such metaphysics simply took determinations of thought immediately “and let them count in their immediacy as predicates of what is true” (EL §28Z, p.66). That is to say, it took the predicates as given, ready-made in representation and assumed them to mark true or real characteristics or qualities of the subject to which they were applied, the subject acting as substratum and the predicates as properties or attributes of that substratum. Hegel urges that in considering what he believes to be such a philosophically naïve position

“(W)e must notice particularly, at this point, that the metaphysical method was to “attach” predicates to the ob-ject of cognition, e.g. to God. This then is an external reflection about the ob-ject, since the determinations (the predicates) are found ready-made in my representation, and are attached to the ob-ject in a merely external way. Genuine cognition of an ob-ject, on the other hand, has to be *such* that the ob-ject determines itself from within itself, and does not acquire its predicates in this external way” (EL §28Z, p.67).

The procedure here, is the same as the form of proof that displayed a coherence between determinations that was external to those determinations, that was imposed on them extrinsically. In such a procedure, determinations such as ‘roof’, ‘walls’ and ‘house’ were brought into a relation with one another that failed to be derived of necessity from the specific content of the determinations on their own account – a ‘roof’ may be connected to a ‘wall’, but taken on its own there is nothing in the content of the determination ‘roof’ that necessitates this connection.

In framing his characterisation of such externality in terms of the general form of judgement in the above quote and throughout his discussion of metaphysics, Hegel identifies a package of criticisms that, at first, may not seem to bear any direct relation to one another. For example, there is the criticism that the predicates are found ready-made in representation, which is to say: they are taken up as possessing true content without investigation. The issue of whether the determinations are merely subjective

representations or whether they capture the intrinsic qualities of the object they are attached to, is not investigated in this metaphysics. There is then also the criticism that the predicates are attached externally to the object. Naturally, if one investigated the particular content of the predicates, there is a sense in which we might say it becomes as a consequence, more unlikely that one will subsequently attach those predicates in an external way, but it is still a possibility<sup>128</sup>, and avoiding one of these criticisms does not guarantee avoidance of the other. Metaphysics for Hegel, succumbs to both and more besides. The predicates used in such metaphysics show themselves to be “a *restricted* content” in failing to “exhaust” their subject, and though they may show a connection to one another insofar as they are attached to one subject, the content of one is diverse to that of another and is opposed to it.

The externality involved in the general form of judgement adopted uncritically in metaphysics, seems then to result from a whole package of problems. What unifies this package is that the whole package is involved in the *completely* uncritical acceptance of the general form of judgement. That is to say, in failing to question *at all* “whether the form of judgement could be the form of truth” (EL §28, p.66), whether the very procedure of attaching predicates (as properties or attributes of a substratum) to a subject (that substratum) in judgement, is the basic activity of thinking insofar as it characterises reality. This is the case in metaphysics for Hegel, where a match between the form of judgement employed and the form of truth was simply presupposed. To adopt such a presupposition is, for Hegel, to assume that, formally, truth matches judgment – that truth is a fixed and isolated content just like the content to which the subject of judgement refers and which acts as a standard for the predication performed in judgement. That the truth is such a standard, that it is fixed (i.e., static and non-dynamic) and capable of being isolated into discreet individual truths is a presupposition which, Hegel urges, must be questioned. This presupposition is encapsulated in Hegel’s characterisation of the objects of this metaphysics – the subjects to which predicates are attached – as also being taken straightforwardly from representation. The “only criterion” then “of whether the predicates fitted, and were satisfactory or not, was that of representation” (EL §30, p.68). Accordingly such metaphysics is dogmatic, in the sense that the subject of a judgment already has an isolated and determinate content taken from representation, the question then of whether or not that judgment is true, comes to depend on whether

<sup>128</sup> Indeed, as we will see, something akin to this occurs, according to Hegel, in the Kantian case.

any contradiction is to be found between the content of the subject and the content of the predicate attached to it in judgement; and given two opposed assertions about the same object “it had to assume that ... one must be *true*, and the other *false*” (EL §32, p.69).

A presupposition of correspondence between the form of judgement and the form of truth is equally what underpins the procedure adopted in the form of proof that aimed at displaying an internal coherence. The model there was one of axiomatic proof, and so the coherence on show in the proof appears internal given the basic starting points: the axioms and principles of construction. But here it is assumed that the truth is axiomatic, that it is fixed in nature and isolatable. The coherence of such proofs is only genuinely established if the coherence traced corresponds ontologically to the coherence it is to establish, if it is no mere representation of it. That is to say such a proof will only escape the externality Hegel ascribes to it, if the way it relates its determinations corresponds to the way the object relates its determinations.

Accordingly, to claim that such a proof does establish internal coherence between determinations (and is therefore a suitable form for the demonstration of God’s existence) is to assume that the form of judgement involved is the form of truth, to use the Hegelian vernacular.

An uncritical acceptance of the general form of judgement may then involve all or just some of the problems involved in metaphysics, but whatever problems it involves, it will display an externality regarding the relation of its predicates to its subjects because it presumes truth to be fixed and isolatable.

If Hegel is to avoid the kind of problems encountered in metaphysics, in his own demonstration of the putative admissibility of the two methods for the unification of thought and being, then obviously a critical revision of the general form of judgement that precludes the externality that infects it is required. Before we look at the nature of Hegel’s revision and its implications for the presentation in the *Phenomenology*, we need to trace the connection between an uncritical acceptance of this general form of judgement and Critical philosophy’s critique of the traditional proofs of God’s existence. This critique was highly influential and we have seen that, according to Hegel’s analysis, it was based upon the formal impropriety of the proofs as syllogisms. However, for Hegel, the true deficiency rests with an uncritical acceptance of the general form of judgement, and this is a deficiency that Critical philosophy fails to address or overcome. In this sense then, Critical philosophy

succumbs to the same deficiency (though to a lesser degree) as that position in which the traditional proofs were asserted, and its critique of them is ill founded insofar as it fails to identify this deeper underlying cause of formal impropriety. Now, if this is an accurate outline of the connection, then Hegel's diagnosis of Critical philosophy's error in its critique may seem quite strange. After all, one of Kant's avowed aims is to revolutionise the procedures of metaphysics, making it scientific and not merely the result of natural disposition (CPR Bxxii), and Hegel himself variously acknowledges Kant's general approach of first critically investigating the fitness of the instrument of cognition to its task, before accepting its deliverances<sup>129</sup>. There is a question then as to whether or not Hegel's diagnosis is accurate. In order to address this question, more detail is needed regarding the relation of metaphysics and the critique of it, to Critical philosophy. For Hegel, this relation is established through Empiricism and a modern scepticism that stems from it.

In Hegel's discussion of empiricism we come to see that essentially the shortcomings of metaphysics are still not addressed and their common cause – an uncritical acceptance of the general form of judgement – remains. Importantly, this transmission of error occurs in spite of, empiricism's origin in a dissatisfaction with the content and grounding of metaphysics. Hegel observes that:

“(E)mpiricism owes its origin to the need ... for a *concrete content* and a *firm footing*, a need which cannot be satisfied by the abstract metaphysics of the understanding. As for this concreteness of content, it simply means that the objects of consciousness are known as inwardly determined, and as a unity of distinct determinations. As we have seen, however, this is in no way the case with any metaphysics based upon the principle of the understanding. As mere understanding, thinking is restricted to the form of the abstract universal, and is unable to advance to the particularisation of this universal. For example, the older metaphysics made the attempt to bring out, through thinking, what the essence or the basic determination of the soul is, and it was decided that the soul is *simple*. This simplicity ascribed to the soul has here the significance of abstract simplicity, excluding all distinction, which, as compositedness, was considered the basic determination of the body and then further of matter generally. Abstract simplicity, however, is a very poor determination, in which it is completely

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<sup>129</sup> For instance, see PS 73, pp. 46-7 and EL §41, Z1, pp.81-2. Of course, he also castigates this Kantian approach for allowing the “mistaken project of wanting to have cognition before we have any cognition, or of not wanting to go into the water before we have learned to swim” (Ibid.) to creep in.

impossible to capture the wealth of the soul and of the spirit as well” (EL §37, Z, pp.76-7).

That is, one of the effects of the procedure of the older metaphysics was to determine its objects in a purely abstract fashion (i.e., one that excludes distinction or particularisation). Its predicates were taken immediately from representation and treated as wholly positive determinations. Accordingly, they were finite insofar as they were fixed against and limited by their opposite. It is in this sense that the objects of metaphysics have only abstract determination – the soul is simple, it does not include or involve compositeness, and similarly, as infinite or positivity, or reality in general, God excludes the finite. Such determinations exclude distinction and the objects of metaphysics are determined in this abstract way as essentially one determination to the exclusion of others.

In contrast empiricism takes the objects of consciousness to be “inwardly determined” and “as a unity of distinct determinations” (Ibid., p.76), eschewing the metaphysical idea that “things as they are *in-themselves* result from the *thinking* of what *is*” (EL §28, p.66) for the principle “that what is true must be in actuality and must be there for our perception” (EL §38, p.77). Hegel characterises the position as follows:

“Instead of seeking what is true in thought itself, Empiricism proceeds to draw it from *experience*, from what is outwardly or inwardly present.

In one respect, Empiricism has this source in common with metaphysics itself, which likewise has representations – i.e., the content that comes originally from experience – as the guarantee for the authentication of its definitions (its presuppositions as well as its more determinate content). But on the other side, this or that single perception is distinct from experience, and Empiricism elevates the content that belongs to perception, feeling, and intuition into the *form of universal notions, principles, and laws*, etc. This only happens, however, in the sense that these universal determinations (for instance, “force”) are not supposed to have any more significance and validity on their own account than that which is taken from perception, and no justification save the connection that can be demonstrated in experience ... In Empiricism there lies this great principle, that what is true must be in actuality and must be there for our perception ... the *consistent* carrying through of its programme denies the supersensible altogether



or at least its cognition and determinacy, and it leaves thinking with abstraction only, [i.e.,] with formal universality and identity” (EL §’s 37/38, pp. 76-7).

In restricting itself to sense-experience as guarantor of the truth of the content of its judgements, empiricism seems to circumvent the abstract determination and lack of distinction or particularisation of content in the older metaphysics. But as Hegel notes, the sacrifice made for this gain in the consistent carrying through of the empiricist programme, is that of genuine universality and necessity. In restricting ourselves purely to the here and now of sense-perception, we are left with only formal universality and identity. That is to say, in taking its content from perception, feeling and intuition, empiricism distinguishes ‘this or that single perception’ from experience *per se* with its attendant determinations of universality and necessity. Such determinations have no justification on their own account and no more significance than that which is taken from perception. ‘God’, ‘the soul’, and so forth, which constituted the objects of cognition for metaphysics (its general subject matter) are denied to be objects of cognition for empiricism. Here, the general subject matter is finite only, as provided in sense-experience. This follows from the principle of empiricism:

“In reflecting upon this principle it has been observed, to begin with, that in what is called ‘experience’ and what has to be distinguished from merely singular perceptions of single facts, there are *two* elements; one of them is the infinitely *manifold material* that isolates itself into single [bits] that stand on their own, the other is the *form*, the determinations of *universality* and *necessity*. It is true that empirical observation does show many perceptions of the same kind, even more than we can count; but universality is altogether something other than a great number. It is true that empirical observation also provides perceptions of alterations *that follow one after the other*, and of objects that *lie side by side*; but it does not provide any *necessary* connection. Since however, perception is to remain the foundation of what counts as truth, universality and necessity appear to be something *unjustified*, a subjective contingency, a mere habit, the content of which may be constituted the way it is or in some other way.

An important consequence of this is that in this empirical approach juridicial and ethical determinations and laws, as well as the content of religion, appear

to be something contingent, and that their objectivity and inner truth have been given up.

Hume's scepticism from which this reflective observation mainly starts, should be very carefully distinguished from *Greek scepticism*. In Humean scepticism, the *truth* of the empirical, the truth of feeling and intuition is taken as basic; and, on that basis, he attacks all universal determinations and laws, precisely because they have no justification by way of sense-perception. The old scepticism was so far removed from making feeling, or intuition, into the principle of truth that it turned itself against the sensible in the very first place instead." (EL §39, p.40).

The 'firm footing' then that was to come from the more 'concrete content' of empiricism belies a certain species of scepticism or potential for doubt regarding the validity of certain determinations. That is, it is a scepticism based on the principle that "what is true must be in actuality and must be there for our perception" (EL §38, p.77). This scepticism is in essence the 'modern scepticism' of Hume, and presumably Schulze, which unlike ancient scepticism, is not "exhaustive as regards the determinate" (LHP, Vol.2, p.365), but is instead to be more properly regarded as a dogmatism in the same way as older metaphysics. Accordingly, empiricism is ultimately to be viewed as dogmatic in its adherence to this principle, irrespective of its motivation<sup>130</sup>. The principle, allowing this species of scepticism, restricts the content of what counts as true (what counts as a valid object of cognition), while still resting on representation as the criterion against which to assess its judgements. Here, there is still failure to question whether the form of judgement is the form of truth, and although there is a restriction of valid objects of cognition, there is a failure to question the content of the predicates employed.

Empiricism's programme consistently carried through, appears as a mirror image of metaphysics in its one-sidedness. It addresses the loss of distinction and particularity in the determination of the objects of metaphysics by restricting itself to

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<sup>130</sup> It is worth recalling here that Hegel viewed the history of the development of scepticism and its treatment, broadly speaking, as being one of a degeneration into dogmatism. He thought it to be in step with the "communal degeneration of philosophy and the world in general" (RSP, p.30/330), such that figures like Schulze and Krug just represented different sides of the same philosophical coin (see Ch.2, section 2 above). The implication, then, that Empiricism simply repeats the errors of the older metaphysics by failing to address their common cause stands in spite of the appearance of a type of scepticism. Though this scepticism seems to point away from the older metaphysics, in basing itself on the principle of empiricism it is no less guilty of merely accepting the general form of judgement as simply capturing or reflecting the truth.

the opposite extreme: the distinction and particularity of the present in sense-experience, forsaking any determination of universality and necessity as unjustified on its own grounds. Hence, it is left with purely formal universality and identity. The principle upon which this position is based, is for Hegel, just as dogmatic as the assertion of metaphysics that the fundamental determinations of things are thought-determinations, even though the principle is motivated by the avoidance of the shortcomings that result from the adherence to the assertion of metaphysics. Both are presupposed and neither position sufficiently investigates its respective grounds.

Hegel traces the relation of this principle and the modern scepticism stemming from it, to Critical philosophy:

“Critical Philosophy has in common with Empiricism that it accepts experience as the *only* basis for our cognitions; but it will not let them count as truths, but only as cognitions of appearances.

The distinction between the elements found in the analysis of experience – the *sensible material* and its *universal relations* – serves as the first starting point. Combined with this we have the reflection that only *what is singular* and only *what happens* are contained in perception [taken] on its own account. But at the same time, Critical Philosophy *holds on to the factum* that *universality* and *necessity*, being also essential determinations, are found to be present in what is called experience. And, because this element does not stem from the empirical as such, it belongs to the spontaneity of *thinking*, or is *a priori*. – The thought-determinations or *concepts of the understanding* make up *the objectivity* of the cognitions of experience.” (EL §40, pp.80-1).

Critical philosophy does not then let representations act straightforwardly or immediately as a criterion of truth insofar as the objectivity of the cognitions of experience is constituted by the concepts of the understanding. Determinations of universality and necessity are taken as essential to experience and are contributed *a priori*, they are *not* derived from perception on its own account, but nor are they mere habit. They are an external addition of sorts, albeit one that is necessary for experience. As such the cognitions of experience can be investigated through the concepts of the understanding (the determinations of universality and necessity) that constitutes their objectivity. The key issue being whether the concepts of the understanding have value or validity on their own account.

Accordingly, Hegel notes, “the Critical Philosophy subjects to investigation the validity of the *concepts of the understanding* that are used in metaphysics, but also in the other sciences and in ordinary representation” (EL §41, p.81). This is, given Hegel’s identification of the common cause of error, “a very important step” (Ibid. Z1, p.81); here for the first time the determinations of the older metaphysics, along with those of empiricism and ordinary representation, are not taken to be valid on their own account. Their capability of being predicates of what is true is not simply taken for granted but is subjected to investigation<sup>131</sup>. Critical philosophy then represents more than a mere synthesis of the older metaphysics and empiricism for Hegel.

However, Hegel observes:

“This critique does not involve itself with the *content* ... or with the determinate mutual relationship of these thought-determinations to each other; instead, it considers them according to the antithesis of *subjectivity* and *objectivity* in general. In the way that it is taken here, this antithesis relates to the distinction of the elements *within* experience. In this context “objectivity” means the element of *universality* and *necessity*, i.e., of the thought-determinations themselves – the so-called a priori. But Critical Philosophy extends the antithesis in such a way that experience *in its entirety* falls within *subjectivity*; i.e., both of these elements together are subjective, and nothing remains in contrast with subjectivity except the thing-in-itself” (EL §41, p.81).

The modern scepticism resulting from reflection upon the principle of empiricism is appropriated into the Critical philosophy as occasion to investigate the validity of the concepts of the understanding; its key distinction, that determinations of universality and necessity are not part of the sensible material of perception taken on its own account, being repeatedly employed in the Kantian critique of the older metaphysics<sup>132</sup>. However, this investigation, according to Hegel, fails to address the

<sup>131</sup> Of course, it is the case that empiricism did not take all of the determinations of the metaphysics preceding it to be valid on their own account – it restricted its general subject matter to sense-perception. However, for Hegel, it is also the case that, it didn’t subject the determinations it rejected to philosophical investigation, rather it rejected a class of determinations on the basis of the presupposition that ‘what is true must be in actuality and must be there for our perception’.

<sup>132</sup> For instance, when we look at Hegel’s comments concerning Kant’s paralogisms and the Ideal of Reason we see references in each case back to such a distinction:

“Kant draws attention to the flaw involved in this transition: that two types of determination are confounded (paralogism), namely, empirical determinations with categories; concluding from the former to the latter, or in general replacing the first with the second is quite unjustified. It is obvious that this criticism expresses nothing other than the comment of Hume that we referred to above (§39): that thought-determinations in general – universality and necessity – are not found in perception and that, both in its content and in its form, the empirical is

‘particular content’ or ‘mutual relation’ of the concepts of the understanding; it only investigates whether they are subjective or objective, which is to say, that Hegel believes that Kant fails to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the categories and their content in the correct way – he fails to provide an adequate deduction of the categories, one in which they can be seen to possess necessity on their own account. This limited investigation has its own value insofar as it succeeds in turning the linguistic usage of these terms in ordinary language on its head. There ‘objective’ refers to that which is given in sense-perception and subsists on its own account as independent, and it is thoughts (the determinations of universality and necessity) that are taken to be ‘subjective’, or not self-standing. In Kantian philosophy an object, given in representation, is a synthetic unity of a manifold of predicates, and its unity is derived from the apperception of the transcendental ego. That is to say, it is this apperceiving activity of the transcendental ego that is constitutive of object-hood. Here, then, “what can be perceived by the senses is really secondary and not self-standing” insofar as it lacks its own unity, which is derived from elsewhere, while what is produced in apperception using a priori determinations of universality and necessity, “what measures up to thought (the universal and the necessary)” (Ibid. Z2, p.83) is ‘objective’. It is these a priori determinations of universality and necessity that stand as independent and primary.

Hegel does not take issue with this investigation as far as it goes, but it is obvious that he does not think that the Kantian philosophy has succeeded in adequately overcoming the externality of the procedures of metaphysics and empiricism. An object, as a synthetic unity of a manifold of predicates, is what constitutes the subject in judgement in the Kantian philosophy, the difficulty being that, in Hegel’s view, the properties of such a subject remain only externally connected to it. As subject, it is merely a collection of predicates combined into a unity through the activity of the transcendental ego<sup>133</sup> and as such, the combination

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diverse from the determination of thought” (EL §47. p.90).

“elevation of thought from the empirical notion of the world to God is countered with the *Humean* standpoint (as was the case with the paralogisms: see §47), the standpoint that proclaims the *thinking* of our perceptions to be inadmissible; i.e. the eliciting of the universal and necessary out of these perceptions” (EL §50, p.95) “What the understanding sets against this second way is in-itself the same as was alleged before, namely that, just as the universal is not found to be present in the empirical, so, conversely, the determinate is not contained in the universal – and the determinate here is “being”. (EL §51, p.98)

<sup>133</sup> As such, the transcendental ego might be termed a quasi-substratum – the focal point from which the predicate’s coherence in a unity is derived. For a more detailed account of such a view see R. Stern 1990, particularly Ch I, pp.22-29.

itself possesses an intrinsic unity of its own located in the transcendental ego, or as Hegel puts it:

“The Ego is what is originally identical, at one with itself, and utterly at home with itself. If I say “I”, this is the abstract self-relation, and what is posited in this unity is infected by it, and transformed into it. Thus the Ego is, so to speak, the crucible and fire through which the indifferent multiplicity is consumed and reduced to unity. This, then, is what Kant calls “pure apperception”.” (EL §42, Z1, pp. 84-5)

However, this intrinsic unity is not absolute, it is rather the subjective activity of the transcendental ego – the combination of a manifold of predicates into a synthetic unity, into an object, is only *for us*. There may be no unity or object in this sense, beyond our powers of cognition; all we can speak of beyond this cognition is an indeterminate thing-in-itself.

Hegel’s point here is not to claim that the Kantian philosophy has failed to go beyond metaphysics and empiricism or has failed to offer a solution to their shortcomings. On the contrary, the Kantian position has combined the insights of both previous positions: it has incorporated empiricism’s critique of the earlier metaphysics, that distinction or the determinate is not to be found in the abstract universal, and takes on board empiricism’s demand for a concrete content, but it also attempts to overcome the formal universality of empiricism by making the determinations of universality and necessity (the categories) that which stands as independent and primary – objects of cognition being given through the modes of combination specified by the categories. The Kantian position seems to perform a delicate balancing act between the previous positions, by reconceiving the relation between the general form of judgement and objects<sup>134</sup>. This is something that Hegel would not deny, so what does objecting that the Kantian philosophy fails to adequately overcome the externality of the previous positions mean?

One way to answer this question can be given in terms of Hegel’s discussion of proof. What we have in the Kantian philosophy, where the object is constituted by the combination of predicates into a unity that seems intrinsic, is a situation akin to

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<sup>134</sup> It could be said that the Kantian philosophy attempts to mediate between two equiposed positions, in the sense that Hegel views the respective grounds of metaphysics and empiricism as equally dogmatic.

that of the second form of proof: the coherence between determinations here appears internal or intrinsic, but is really only a subjective necessity – a function of the various modes in which we make the combination. There is no absolute unity underwriting the unity supplied by the apperception of the transcendental ego, and accordingly the categories are simply subjective in the sense that they lack necessity on their own account<sup>135</sup>. In fairness to the Kantian, he may well reply to such an accusation of externality that it need not trouble him in the least – this is simply the result of his investigation and the price that has to be paid for the solution to the shortcomings of metaphysics and empiricism. Hegel would have to accept this rebuttal if he thought that the Kantian investigation had been carried out thoroughly enough, if he thought the critique of the concepts of the understanding involved in it concerned itself with the ‘content or with the determinate mutual relationship of these thought-determinations to each other’, but he does not. For Hegel, the categories are simply adopted empirically from the table of judgements and are only investigated to see whether they are subjective or objective, their content and relationship is taken for granted<sup>136</sup>. It is this claim then that Hegel falls back on in his assertion of externality as problematic for the Kantian philosophy. We do not need to accept the Kantian result as the price that *has* to be paid, because it has not been demonstrated that it has to be paid. Critical philosophy of the Kantian form is certainly an improvement on metaphysics and empiricism, but crucially it still suffers from a similar externality, and accordingly dogmatism<sup>137</sup>.

<sup>135</sup> “What human beings strive for in general is cognition of the world: we strive to appropriate it and to conquer it. To this end the reality of the world must be crushed as it were: i.e., it must be made ideal. At the same time, however, it must be remarked that it is not the subjective activity of self-consciousness that introduces absolute unity into the multiplicity in question: rather, this identity is the Absolute, genuineness itself” (EL §42, Z1, p. 85). “That the *categories* are to be regarded as belonging only to *us* (or as “subjective”) must seem very bizarre to the ordinary consciousness, and there is certainly something awry here. This much is correct about it, however: that the categories are not contained in immediate sensation. ... when we regard two events as standing to one another in the relationship of cause and effect: what is perceived here is the two isolated events, which succeed one another in time. But that one is the cause and the other the effect (the causal nexus between them) is not perceived: on the contrary, it is present merely for our thinking. Now, although the categories (e.g., unity, cause and effect, etc.) pertain to thinking as such, it does not at all follow from this that they must be therefore merely something of ours, and not also determinations of objects themselves. But, according to Kant’s view, this is what is supposed to be the case, and his philosophy is *subjective idealism*, inasmuch as the Ego (the knowing subject) furnishes both the *form* and also the *material* of knowing – the former as *thinking* and the latter as *sensing* subject” (EL §42, Z3, pp.85-6).

<sup>136</sup> We should bear in mind here that making this claim involves a strong reading of Kant’s claims in his ‘metaphysical deduction’ (see Ch. 2, note 49, p.103).

<sup>137</sup> A similar verdict also holds for Fichtean philosophy, albeit for slightly different reasons:

“Initially, the principle that thinking determines itself from within was established in a merely formal way in the Kantian philosophy: Kant did not demonstrate the *manner* and *extent* of this self-determination of thinking. On the contrary, it was Fichte who recognised this defect: and when he made his demand for a deduction of the categories, he also tried at the same time to furnish an actual deduction too. Fichte’s philosophy makes the Ego the starting point for the development of philosophical thinking: and the categories are supposed to result from its activity. But the Ego does not genuinely appear as free, spontaneous activity here, since it is regarded as having

We can now begin to see why Hegel insists that the Kantian critique of the proofs of God's existence has no effect on their true content when he comes to discuss it in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*. There he objects that:

"(S)ince man is a thinking being, neither sound common sense nor philosophy will ever give up raising itself *out of* the empirical worldview to God. This elevation has the *thinking* consideration of the world as its only foundation, not the merely sensory one that we have in common with the animals. It is for thinking, and for thinking *alone*, that the *essence*, the *substance*, the *universal might*, and *purposive determination* of the world are [present]. The so-called proofs that God is there have to be seen simply as the *descriptions* and analyses of the inward *journey of the spirit*. It is a *thinking* journey and it thinks what is sensory. The *elevation* of thinking above the sensible, its *going out* above the finite to the infinite, the *leap* that is made into the supersensible when the sequences of the sensible are broken off, all this is thinking itself; this transition is *only thinking*. To say that this passage ought not to take place means that there is to be no thinking." (EL §50, p.95).

It is now obvious that Hegel objects to any philosophical position that limits its view of the truth to the empirical or that completely rejects the result of 'the elevation of thinking above the sensible', the result of the 'so-called' proofs of God's existence, on the grounds of formal impropriety, because these grounds are forwarded on the basis of an uncritical or insufficiently critical acceptance of the general form of judgement. As far as Hegel is concerned, when viewed from such a basis the proofs may well suffer from such impropriety, but to discount them on this basis alone is unjustifiable, and rather like throwing the baby out with the bathwater. It seems that what Hegel intends to refer to here by the 'elevation of thinking' might be usefully considered as

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been aroused only by a shock from outside: the Ego is then supposed to react to this shock, and to achieve consciousness of itself through this reaction.

On this view, the nature of the shock remains something outside of cognition, and the Ego is always something conditioned which is confronted by another. So, in this way Fichte, too, came to a halt at Kant's conclusion that there is cognition only of the finite, and the infinite transcends thinking. What Kant calls "the thing-in-itself" is for Fichte the shock from outside, this abstraction of something other than the Ego, which has no determination other than that it is negative: it is the Non-Ego in general. So the Ego is regarded as standing in relation to the Non-Ego. It is only the Non-Ego that arouses its self-determining activity, and it does this in such a way that the Ego is only the continuous activity of self-liberation from the shock. But it never achieves actual liberation, since the cessation of the shock would mean the cessation of the Ego, whose being is simply its activity. Moreover, the content that the activity of the Ego brings forth is nothing else but the usual content of experience, with the added proviso that this content is merely appearance" (EL §60, Z2, p.108).

This should come as no surprise given Hegel's treatment of Kant and Fichte together in PS C(AA.) (see Ch 2.), where the general criticism expressed is essentially the same as here.



analogous to the ‘ascending’ function of Reason in Kantian terminology<sup>138</sup>. This allows us to see that Hegel’s point regarding the Kantian critique is that assessment of the deliverances of such a function of Reason (i.e. the proof’s of God’s existence) based on an insufficiently critical acceptance of the general form of judgement, is a mistake. It is just this mistake that is being made when this function of Reason is characterised and assessed by Kant in the terms of the principles and standards of the Understanding. These principles and standards are derived from an insufficiently critical acceptance of the general form of judgement and as such cannot be assumed, without further investigation, to provide characterisation and assessment free from distortion. This is what Hegel means when defining “the great mistake” as “wanting cognition of the nature of thinking only in this form that is proper to the understanding” (EL §50, p.96). Naturally, we will fail to represent the function or process of Reason in an accurate form if we depend on the uncritical acceptance of the general form of judgement displayed in metaphysics, and similarly for any other philosophy, we can expect only a misrepresentation of such a function if the uncritical acceptance isn’t adequately addressed. This then, for Hegel, is what we have in the Kantian critique: a distortion or misrepresentation of the function of Reason, the apparent formal impropriety of the proofs of God’s existence being just a function of the distortion.

### 3. The Revision of the Form of Judgement

We can now turn to Hegel’s revision of the general form of judgement and its implications regarding a demonstration of the true content of the proofs of God’s existence. We will recall that Hegel’s analysis of the forms of proving identified the general form of judgement adopted as responsible for the externality of those procedures. Correspondingly, in the metaphysics that espoused the traditional proofs of God’s existence, such externality was found to result from an uncritical acceptance of this general form of judgement, and in the empiricism and Critical philosophy that followed, which criticised both this metaphysics and the traditional proofs, the general form of judgement was still found to have been adopted without sufficient critical investigation. The fundamental problem then, with this general form in reference to

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<sup>138</sup> See CPR A330-2/B386-9.

proving or demonstrating God's existence, as Hegel sees it, can be summarised in the following way:

“(W)hat has to be demonstrated is a proposition, a judgement in fact, with a subject and predicate. We cannot, to begin with, find any fault with the demand here implied, and it looks as if the whole point turned on the nature of the act of proof. But the very fact that it is a judgement which has to be proved at once renders any true philosophical proof impossible. For it is the subject which is presupposed, and consequently becomes the standard for the predicate the truth of which has to be proved; and accordingly the essential criterion so far as the proposition is concerned, is merely whether the predicate is adequate to the subject or not, and idea or ordinary thought, on which the presupposition is based, is taken as deciding the truth. But the main and only concern of knowledge, the claims of which have not been satisfied, and which have not even been taken into account, is just to find out whether this very presupposition contained in the subject, and consequently the further specification it gets through the predicate, is the totality of the proposition and is true” (LPEG, pp.256-7).

This is a neat general summary of the basic problem that Hegel sees as being inherent in the general form of judgement, but it will require some unpacking if we are to relate its details to the revision of this form that Hegel takes to be necessary. This will take some pages, but we might begin by noting that the aspect which renders any ‘true philosophical proof impossible’ is that it is a ‘judgement’ which has to be proved.

Just what it is about a judgement which causes this, is that it is the ‘subject which is presupposed’ and taken as the criterion or standard by which the conformity of the predicate (to the subject) is to be evaluated, “and accordingly the essential criterion ... is merely whether the predicate is adequate to the subject or not, and idea or ordinary thought, on which the presupposition is based, is taken as deciding the truth” (Ibid.). So, in such a procedure the content of the subject, drawn from ‘ordinary thought’, is taken to be affirmative, that is, it is taken to represent the truth and is held fixed as a standard by which to assess that which is predicated of it. If what is predicated of such a subject measures up to the content of that subject then the predication is deemed to be true. Now this may appear puzzling. Ordinarily (for us now), truth is a property of a proposition, not of its constituent parts. It is the content

of the judgement as whole which is deemed to be true, not just a predicate or a subject. So what is meant by Hegel in highlighting the acceptance of the presupposed content of the subject as criterion, as that which renders any true philosophical proof impossible?

In answering this question we need to be clear about the kind of truth that is usually ascribed to propositions or judgements. Ordinarily what makes a proposition a true proposition is the accordance of its content with the way things are. That is, the standard of truth is usually taken to be external to the proposition or judgement made: a certain property is predicated of a subject and we look outside the judgement to the world, to determine whether that which is predicated of the subject in thought actually is a property of that subject. This kind of approach presupposes that we have access to such an external standard. The standard here is an external, actual counterpart to the whole judgement, it is the actual concrete individual with all its properties, which the judgement aims to reflect.

Obviously on this kind of account of propositional truth, the content of such a standard does not appear to be presupposed. The standard is external to thought and this is precisely what makes it a good or desirable standard. So what sense are we to give to Hegel's assertion of the subject of judgement as a presupposed standard?

Well, what is presupposed in propositional truth is that we have access to an external standard. Indeed, it is normally presupposed that we have a direct or immediate access to this standard, we presuppose that 'the rose' of a judgement, say, that 'the rose is red', is *that* rose, out there in the world in front of us. We presuppose that we are able to correctly isolate or individuate the subject of judgement by identifying it with an external, individual objective counterpart as its standard. But, for Hegel (following Kant), having a concept like 'rose' involves judgement. Such a subject term is constituted by a synthesis of different representations into a unity. In the general form of judgement, the truth of this subject-constitutive judgement is not questioned, that is, whether the concept of the subject, that we presume matches an external standard, is a true concept or not, is not asked. What is meant by something being a *true* concept, is not that it be identifiable with some external counterpart or appear to be instantiated, *a la* propositional truth. It is not being asked whether the concept 'rose' can be identified with an object out there in the world, but rather, whether the concept 'rose' here matches or conforms to its essential nature. Hegel's point in asserting that the subject of judgement is a presupposed standard of truth, is

that in identifying an external standard of truth out there in the world, we are assuming *our* concept of the subject to be a true concept of that subject, i.e. we are assuming that it matches the essential nature of that subject and correctly individuates it, just as it was assumed in the case of proofs of internal coherence or necessity, that our proof captured the internal necessity of the determination itself. In this case the proofs, and the coherence they were to demonstrate, proceeded from pre-existing assumptions which were assumed to reflect or match features of the determination to be demonstrated. This is the sense in which the subject term is a presupposed standard: it is taken to accurately capture the essence of that to which it refers, such that an instantiation of that concept could stand as an external standard by which to measure judgements.

So, for Hegel, it is not an external standard that furnishes the truth conditions for a judgement, but rather the concept of the subject employed, and in expressing matters in this way it becomes clear that Hegel does not hold that truth consists in the identity of a proposition's or judgement's content with a fact. Instead, truth in Hegel's sense could be said to be *material* truth<sup>139</sup> – it consists in the accordance of a thing with its essence. Accordingly he notes in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*:

“(T)he question about the truth of thought-determinations is bound to sound strange to our ordinary consciousness, for the determinations of thought seem to acquire truth only in their application to given ob-jects, and on this assumption it makes no sense to question their truth apart from this application. But this question is precisely the point at issue. Certainly, when we raise it, we must know what is to be understood by “truth”. In the ordinary way, what we call “truth” is the agreement of an ob-ject with our representation of it. We are then presupposing an object to which our representation is supposed to conform.

In the philosophical sense, on the contrary, “truth”, expressed abstractly and in general, means the agreement of a content with itself. This is therefore a meaning of “truth” quite different from the one mentioned above” (EL §24, Z2, pp.59-60)<sup>140</sup>.

<sup>139</sup> The distinction of ‘material’ truth from ‘propositional’ truth is made in Heidegger 1977, and is employed in reference to Hegel’s conception of truth in R. Stern 1993.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. EL §213, p.286: “truth means that objectivity corresponds with the Concept – not that external things correspond with my representations (representations of this kind are just *correct* representations held by *me* as *this* [individual]”.

The difficulty then, inherent in the general form of judgement that precludes a true philosophical proof of God's existence being given, is that the presupposed concept of the subject is just not questioned as to its material truth, that is, it is not asked whether *our* concept matches the essence of that subject. Instead, our concept is held fixed and taken to be affirmative, it is assumed as the standard for the truth of the predicate.

What would be required for such a proof is a judgement in which the material truth of the subject-term is not presupposed, in which, instead, the content of the subject-term can be seen to develop or unfold in its own necessity. This would involve a rejection or dissolution of the fixed content that we ordinarily take to be affirmative, a dissolution of those features of the general form of judgement responsible for the distortion present in the accounts of metaphysics, empiricism, and Critical philosophy, and that leads to the view of the proofs of God's existence as suffering from formal impropriety.

In contending that such a proof can be given, Hegel is contending that the general form of judgement – the relating of subject and predicate on the basis of a fixed, presupposed content belonging to the subject-term – does not represent the true process of judgement. In judging, thought does not simply remain satisfied with the presupposed content of the subject as a standard of truth, but is, for Hegel, ultimately driven beyond that content to the determination of a materially true content.

Key to understanding how this occurs, is grasping the way in which Judgement (*Urteil*)<sup>141</sup> for Hegel functions essentially as a separation or division between subject and predicate. It is only by separating subject and predicate that subject and predicate can be related, and in applying predicate to subject, judgement maintains the distinction between these elements<sup>142</sup>. This *process* of separation is captured in the general form of judgement: in the distinction between subject and predicate.

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<sup>141</sup> *Ur-teil* can be rendered as 'primary' or 'original division'.

<sup>142</sup> It's generally accepted that Hegel derived his view of judgement from Hölderlin (see 'Judgement and Being' in Hölderlin 1988), who claimed against Fichte that the transcendental subject cannot be used as an initial or absolute principle because it does not involve unity, but rather division or separation (of itself as subject from itself as object). Such separation (and any subsequent relation) of subject and object belongs to judgement, which for Hölderlin cannot be basic or primary, but can instead only function in the context of a more basic and general apprehension of a deeper, underlying unity (Being). This Being, for Hölderlin, is no object of rational knowledge and so cannot be demonstrated or proved (access to it could only be offered through poetic expression). Hegel's own view obviously would not concur with this last claim, for Hegel, on the contrary, such being (unity) immanently develops into its opposite (division) by which it is self-mediated. It displays the self-reflective structure of subjectivity, separating itself as subject from itself as object.

Hegel contends that if we consider the general form of judgement more closely, we'll see that the subject is always separate or divided from the predicate in an important sense:

“With regard to the more precise determinacy of the subject and the predicate, the *first ...* is the solid ground in which the predicate has its subsistence and is ideal (it *inheres* in the subject); and since the subject is altogether and *immediately* concrete, the determinate content of the predicate is only *one* of the *many* determinacies of the subject, and the latter [is] richer and wider than the predicate.

Conversely, the predicate, as what is universal, subsists on its own account, and is indifferent as to whether this subject is or is not; it reaches beyond the subject, *subsumes* it under itself, and is for its part wider than the subject” (EL §170, p.247).

The problem is that the subject – as an immediately concrete individual – receives a distorted characterization in the judgement, because it is identified with an abstract, universal predicate in which its concreteness is dissolved. That is, the concreteness of the subject is fractured or broken up into independent marks or attributes – integral aspects of this individual are hypostatized into independent, abstract universals (predicates) which are identified with the subject, characterizing it in judgement. This characterization however, is more accurately a kind of external reconfiguring of the entity, in which the the marks or attributes *in their abstractedness* are applied to it.

Thus, this difference of subject and predicate in judgment seems to make it unsuitable for expressing what is concrete. In judgement the subject represents what is concrete and individual insofar as the subject is implicitly taken to be the ground of the predicate – that in which the predicate inheres. The predicate therefore initially seems to have a secondary status in comparison with the subject – it is derivative and dependent on the subject as the concrete individual to which it belongs. However, in its application to the subject in judgement the predicate is applied as a separate, isolated content applicable to a whole range of subjects – in short, as an abstract universal. As such the subject *qua* concrete individual seems to be dissolved in the predicate, or subsumed under it. The predicate, as abstract universal, is indifferent as to whether this particular subject is or is not.

For Hegel then, the general form of judgment is not formally apposite to the truth. Far from the general form of judgement being the form of truth, it seems that:

“the form of the proposition, or more precisely that of the judgement, is incapable of expressing what is concrete (and what is true is concrete) and speculative”.

We can see how this separation of subject and predicate in judgement factors into Hegel's account of pre-Critical metaphysics and empiricism encountered earlier. Such metaphysics, we will recall, presupposes that “what objects genuinely are is brought before consciousness, through *thinking about* them” (EL §26, p.65). That is to say, it assumes that reality (“what objects genuinely are”) is only given through its characterization in thought, and not in sensation (as the immediate presentation of things) (EL §28 Zusätze, p.66). This is an aspect which Hegel applauds<sup>143</sup>, though he doesn't applaud the attendant, unquestioned acceptance of the general form of judgement as the form of truth – its unquestioned acceptance that such characterizing is accurately carried out in judgment. The difficulty here is that there is no questioning of the determinations used in judgement, neither of the predicate determinations, which as abstract cannot accurately represent the concreteness of the subject (EL §28-9, pp.66-8), nor of the subject determination, which is simply taken as granted from representation to act as a standard or criterion for the predication<sup>144</sup> (EL §30-1, pp. 68-9). As such, this metaphysics seems to characterize individual subjects according to a contingent criterion and in terms of abstract universals that are indifferent to the subject to which they putatively belong, i.e. those characterizations seem to tell one nothing of the essential nature of the subject, which is itself constituted by a seemingly contingent content.

It is not surprising then, that empiricism, which Hegel claims “owes its origin to the need ... for a *concrete content* and a *firm footing*, a need which cannot be satisfied by the abstract metaphysics of the understanding” (EL §37, Zusätze, p.76), displays a certain nominalism in restricting what is to count as truth to what is immediately present in sensation, i.e. in perception, intuition and so forth (EL §38, p.77). Here there is a rejection of the presupposition of pre-Critical metaphysics that

<sup>143</sup>For example: “This science regarded the thought-determinations as the *fundamental determinations of things*; and, in virtue of this presupposition, that the cognition of things as they are *in-themselves* results from the *thinking* of what *is*, it stood at a higher level than the later critical philosophizing” (EL §28, p.66).

“what was good about it was the consciousness that thought alone constitutes the essentiality of what is” (EL §36 Zusätze, p.76).

<sup>144</sup>That is to say, the content of the subject determination is simply accepted as complete and ready-made from whatever has come to be represented or meant by that subject term. For example, if the subject is 'God', then the content which forms the standard for any predication is that which the term 'God' empirically has come to represent. (In this particular case the content might be stipulated or codified by the Church.) The important feature of this, for Hegel, is that no question is asked as to whether this content, which is taken as the standard for the predication, is itself accurate.

the fundamental determinations of things are thought-determinations and, accordingly, the universal determinations of thought are “not supposed to have any more significance and validity on their own account than that which is taken from perception, and no justification save the connection that can be demonstrated in experience” (Ibid.). This restriction of what is to count as truth (i.e. as the criterion for a predication) is to provide the “firm footing” along with the “concrete content” that metaphysics lacks. Hegel highlights, however, that matters haven't fundamentally changed from metaphysics: there is still no critical investigation into the general form of judgement. Whereas the concrete content of perception here counts as the standard of truth, is here the content against which to check the accuracy of a certain predication, this content qua standard can only be characterized in terms of abstract universals. That is, if the determinate content of this standard is not provided in terms of abstract universals, then it cannot function as a standard against which to measure the accuracy of a predication in judgement. And yet, if it is so provided, then it seems that one is back in the position of metaphysics, where that which objects are in-themselves is only provided in thought (as judgement).

One seemingly either relapses into the presupposition of metaphysics or maintains that perception is to remain the foundation of what counts as truth, thereby sacrificing the universal determinations employed in judgement as “something *unjustified*, a subjective contingency” (EL §39, p.80) and so forth. Either way the result is the same: truth, as what is concrete and necessary, is over here and divorced from its determination in thought, which is over there.

Now, for Hegel, Critical philosophy attains a recognition of the separation involved in judgement, and there is no assumption of immediate access to the object. Here representation is not straightforwardly or immediately taken as a standard for, or criterion of, truth. Instead the unity of distinct determinations constitutive of object-hood comes to be seen as subjective, deriving from the transcendental ego, the knowing ‘I’, and judgement, accordingly, comes to be seen as an act of composition. While the subject of judgement here is no longer something that, in its content, can be assumed to have an accurate, external counterpart – the unity of the object is not something in the world – there is still a difficulty. Kant still holds to the general form of judgement as the basic activity of thought. He still holds the thing to which the subject refers to be a fixed, isolated standard, even though it is not cognitively accessible.



This can be seen in the element of empirical realism that Kant retains in his theory. For Kant, the categories contributed by thought are essentially without content apart from sensible intuition. Which is just to say that without the input of sensibility, without their application to sensation, no determinate object can be provided by them<sup>145</sup>. Sensation itself must, in turn, be grounded in something external from human subjectivity. If this were not the case then sensation would not be an effect of something external to oneself, but would find its ground inside oneself. That is, the raw input from which objects are constituted would be grounded within oneself, and objects would be the creation of oneself. This is, then, the element of empirical realism that Kant maintains in his theory – one's experience is not merely constituted by one's own independent mental states, it is not limited to one's representations, but involves a constraint by the world; there can be no objects of perception, no empirical reality, without our sensibility being *affected* by something over against it – some external ground of sensibility. This role of the external ground of sensibility is fulfilled by the thing-in-itself.

In his *Phenomenology of Spirit*<sup>146</sup> Hegel refers to this element as an “extraneous impulse”, saying of Critical philosophy:

“It is involved in a direct contradiction; it asserts essence to be a duality of opposed factors, the *unity of apperception* and equally a *Thing*; whether the Thing is called an extraneous impulse, or an empirical or sensuous entity, or the Thing-in-itself, it still remains in principle the same, i.e. extraneous to that unity” (p. 145)

This provides the basic form of the difficulty that Hegel is concerned with in Kant's system. The difficulty consists in a dichotomy of the synthesizing activity (i.e. apperception) of the transcendental ego, through which the concrete individuality of objects is constituted, and the thing-in-itself as the non-sensible origin of the determinate content of those objects.

Hegel is not here denying the element of empirical realism that Kant maintains, pretending as if the thing-in-itself were completely divorced from experience, and this is not the issue here for Hegel. Rather, Hegel thinks that Kant renders his position *inconsistent* by holding that the thing-in-itself is ontologically dichotomous from our *concepts*. That is to say, Hegel thinks that Kant makes the unity of apperception the principle of sensibility which provides content for the

<sup>145</sup>This is not to say that aside from sensibility the categories lack any meaning whatsoever – insofar as they make an independent contribution to cognition, they must have some meaning on their own account.

<sup>146</sup>G. W. F. Hegel 1977.

categories – that objects in the form in which they are given to our sensibility are already determined by conceptual conditions:

“the original synthetic unity of apperception is recognized also as the principle of the figurative synthesis, i.e. of the forms of intuition; space and time are themselves conceived as synthetic unities, and spontaneity, the absolute synthetic activity of the productive imagination, is conceived as the principle of ...sensibility” (Hegel 1977, p.69-70).

As such, it seems wholly mysterious to Hegel how the thing-in-itself, on Kant's account, is to function as the external ground of sensibility *qua* something *independent* of the synthesizing activity of apperception. If what is given in intuition is always at least minimally conceptualized, then it seems that our concepts are not applied to some prior non-conceptual deliverance of sensibility. As I have already highlighted, this is not to deny the element of empirical realism in Kant – for Hegel, there is still constraint by the world, only this constraint is itself conceptually determined. Consequently, from Hegel's perspective Kant's thing-in-itself is an unnecessary assumption.

If this is the case, the dichotomy of things-in-themselves and concepts is an unnecessary assumption (and one which Kant himself equivocates over), then there is, in principle, no insuperable impediment to determining an object in its truth or concreteness. The basic thought is that if the concreteness of the various determinations of the object stems from the activity of the transcendental ego, that is, if the transcendental ego in its activity acts as a quasi-substratum uniting the determinations, then what we are missing or what is required to express the object in its concreteness are the various determinations of the transcendental ego (as that quasi-substratum) itself. Now, the categories represent the determinations of the transcendental ego, insofar as they specify the various modes in which determinations in general are combined to constitute unities. So, in order to reach the truth, for Hegel, we require a deduction of the various categories, i.e a demonstration of their necessity, and, as we have already seen, it is precisely this which, for Hegel, Kant fails to provide. According to Hegel, Kant produces a list of categories by adopting them “empirically” from the table of judgments specified by traditional (i.e. Aristotelian) logic, taking their content and relationship for granted, rather than providing a genuine deduction. That is, on Hegel's diagnosis Kant accepts judgment as the central cognitive act of thought because judgment is taken to be the basic

activity of thought by traditional logic, and in doing so Kant fails to appropriately question the form of judgement and demonstrate that the categories he specifies are the necessarily inherent categories of thought.

Now, for Hegel, if in judgement the standard is not presupposed, and the subject term is instead treated as an empty name, a merely approximate attempt to identify the subject, then the only determination to be found stems from the predication<sup>147</sup>. In this case the predicate provides the determinate content of the subject, and acts as the standard for the subject. In other words the content here expressed by the predicate would be an essential, inner determination of a single encompassing subject – this universal content would constitute the individual subject. It is just such a presupposition that, for Hegel, leads to an irreparable divide between thought and being opening up, as the determinate content of the subject comes to be viewed as constituted only in thought and as fixed in that thought, there is no access to that subject's true being. Or, put in terms of Hegel's discussion of proof, there is no access to the internal coherence or necessity of that subject's determinations, there are merely our subjective re-presentations of it.

If the presupposition of the subject of judgement is suspended in this way, then the fixity and affirmative nature of the subject as criterion collapses: the standard or criterion in judgement by which the truth of the predicate was to be established, was furnished by the content of the subject, the content of the predicate being compared to that of the subject for conformity, but this content (of the subject) is presupposed, hypothetical, and as such so too is the standard or criterion used for comparison. Hegel makes this plain in his discussion of the Cosmological Proof in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, where the transformation involved in 'thinking the empirical world' "exercises a *negative* activity with regard to that foundation as well", with regard to that subject (the empirical world) as the fixed, affirmative starting-point for the proof. He claims, "when the perceived material is determined by universality, it does *not remain* in its first, empirical shape. With the removal and *negation* of the shell, the inner *import* of what is perceived is brought out" (Ibid.).

<sup>147</sup> Cf.: "In every judgement the subject is an idea which has been presupposed, and which is defined in the predicate, that is, an idea which is defined or determined in a general way by thought, which means, again, that the determinations or specific qualities of the content of the subject have to be indicated, even if, as in the case of material predicates, red, hard, and so on, this general mode of determination, which is, so to speak, the share thought has in the matter, is really nothing more than the empty form of universality. Thus, when it is said that God is infinite, eternal, and so on, God is, to begin with, as a subject simply something hypothetical, existing in idea, and it is only in the predicate that it is first asserted *what* He is. So far as the subject is concerned, we do not know what He is, that is, what content He has, or what is the determinate character of the content, as otherwise it would be superfluous to have the coupola "is" and to attach the predicate to it" (LPEG, p.254).

This last claim may seem mysterious. Would not a collapse of the criterion of judgement simply result in just that – a collapse, which leaves us without any criterion? In what way does such a collapse bring out an ‘inner import’?

In response Hegel points to the fact that in the collapse of the subject as criterion, we have a reversal of the priority of subject over predicate as criterion, and a dissolution of their distinction – the subject and predicate collapse into one another. Ordinarily and at first the subject is taken as a fixed affirmative substrate or substance on which the predicates hang as accidents. Here thought has no role *in* the substance, which is a separate, fixed, object-like entity, and (just as we saw in metaphysics) thought directly cognises or reflects this substance and its accidents, the relation in thought of subject and predicate directly imitating the object-like relation of the substance and its accidents. When the Kantian philosophy arrives, the transcendental ego or knowing ‘I’ takes the place of that first subject: of the fixed, affirmative substrate or substance, and accordingly here thought appears to take the dominant role of the substance – that which connects subject and predicate in a unity is the knowing ‘I’. However, the first subject has not simply been done away with, and in the Kantian philosophy we still have fixed, affirmative subjects to which predicates are to be compared for conformity, but in attempting the comparison we find that the content of the logical subject has passed to the side of the predicate: in the object we find only the knowing ‘I’. The primacy of the subject as a basis for comparison (its role as standard or criterion) is broken down, and the content of the predicate now expresses the essence of the subject – subject and predicate have collapsed into one another. The ‘inner import’ that is putatively laid bare is indicated in the ‘speculative proposition’ that results.

“Usually, the Subject is first made the basis, as the *objective* fixed self; thence the necessary movement to the multiplicity of determinations or Predicates proceeds. Here, the Subject is replaced by the knowing ‘I’ itself, which links the Predicates with the Subject holding them. But, since that first Subject enters into the determinations themselves and is their soul, the second Subject, viz. the knowing ‘I’, still finds in the predicate what it thought it had finished with and got away from, and from which it had hoped to return to itself; and, instead of being able to function as the determining agent in the movement of predication, arguing back and forth whether to attach this or that Predicate, it is really still occupied

with the self of the content, having to remain associated with it, instead of being for-itself.

Formally, what has been said can be expressed thus: the general nature of the judgement or proposition, which involves the distinction of Subject and Predicate, is destroyed by the speculative proposition, and the proposition of identity which the former becomes contains the counter-thrust against that subject-predicate relationship" (PS 60/61, pp.37-8)

A speculative proposition, as Hegel calls it, as that which remains (and in being a proposition that expresses identity or equivalence), contains or exemplifies the transformation or *inversion* of the traditional subject/predicate relation which occurs when our thought is forced to move from a judgemental or reflective mode to a genuinely speculative one. That is, such propositions are, in some way, to function as a catalyst or impetus to a movement to properly speculative thought – forcing a reconsideration of the general form of judgement by disrupting the usual subject/predicate relation we find there, and urging us to move beyond it. By way of example Hegel provides two speculative propositions: 'God is being' and 'the actual is the universal':

"in the proposition 'God is being', the Predicate is 'being'; it has the significance of something substantial in which the Subject is dissolved. 'Being' is here meant to be not a Predicate, but rather the essence; it seems, consequently, that God ceases to be what he is from his position in the proposition, viz. a fixed Subject. Here thinking, instead of making progress in the transition from Subject to Predicate, in reality feels itself checked by the loss of the Subject, and, missing it, is thrown back on to the thought of the Subject. Or, since the Predicate itself has been expressed as a Subject, as *the being* or *essence* which exhausts the nature of the Subject, thinking finds the Subject immediately in the Predicate ... it is still absorbed in the content, or at least is faced with the demand that it should be. Similarly, too, when one says: 'the *actual* is the *universal*', the actual as subject disappears in its predicate. The universal is not meant to have merely the significance of a predicate, as if the proposition asserted only that the actual is universal; on the contrary, the universal is meant to express the essence of the actual" (PS 62, pp.38-9)

Such propositions thus indicate what is involved in Hegel's revision of the general form of judgement. Here the conditions of the subject acting as standard or criterion

for the predicate, i.e. its fixity, isolation and affirmative nature, are dissolved, they will not apply. Instead the subject is devoid of pre-determined, fixed content: it is an approximation or empty name<sup>148</sup>, the essential content of which is to come from its series of predicates.

There are a number of important implications that follow from this revision:

First, the content now expressed by the predicate is an essential, inner determination of a singular encompassing subject or totality. In the general form of judgement, exemplified by 'S is P', we have the usual Aristotelian candidates of substance and attribute/accident in the respective positions of 'S' and 'P', while 'is' expresses a relation that holds between the judgement terms. In the speculative revision 'S' is the empty name of the singular subject as a totality, and so 'P' expresses not an accidental property of 'S' that may belong to many different subjects, but rather an essential determination of the one subject. Accordingly, a speculative proposition aims at capturing an inner relation of necessity and it is in this sense that such propositions aim at bringing out the 'inner import' of what is perceived. To achieve this the starting point of a philosophical proof must be something immediate, something which does not have its ground outside of itself – an absolute or primitive, and such a starting point is just what we find in Hegel's system in the form of immediate consciousness in the *Phenomenology* and pure, indeterminate being in the *Logic*.

Second, this speculative revision affords a doubling of the direction in which the judgement is to be read. With the previous general form the judgement reads one way only: 'S is P'. For example, where we have 'rose' as subject and 'red' as predicate, we have the judgement 'the rose is red', and not 'the red is rose'. This is due to the relation of the subject as substance which supports its accidents, to the predicate, which as accident subsists on that basis. The relation here is fixed, the predicate as accident cannot support the subject as substance: we cannot read 'P is S' or 'the red is rose'. In speculative thought 'P' is no longer an accidental property of

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<sup>148</sup> As opposed to a proper name such as 'God', into which tradition has loaded a large pre-determined and fixed content. The speculative proposition then can be viewed as a tool by which this content is dissolved, leaving us with a hypothetical element for subject: an empty name. That is, it compels us to reconsider it (the proposition) and understand it in some other way. At the same time, however, it cannot be a proper expression of philosophical truth, as it employs a propositional form, one which, even though it expresses a relation of identity, nevertheless distinguishes the elements related. As such it seems that a truly speculative content cannot be captured by the usual propositional form, implying it cannot be formalised into a traditional logic.

‘S’ and there is a reversal of the direction in which ‘S is P’ can be read: we can also read ‘P is S’. Does this mean that Hegel would countenance ‘the red is rose’? The answer is, I think, ‘certainly not’, but to understand why we need to understand the level at which speculative thought and its development occurs. It should already be plain that such thought deals with a subject matter that is taken to lie below the level of empirical perception or representation, not in the sense of a substance, but in the sense of being internal to it, its essence – it is to bring out the ‘inner import’ of what is perceived. A judgement such as ‘the rose is red’ is made at this empirical level, and a speculative proposition, along with the double direction involved in it, lies below this level, forming its essential content. The Hegelian revision of the general form of such judgement comes through the Kantian realisation of the knowing ‘I’ as constitutive of objectivity, in which the categories are reinstated as the essential determinations of empirical things. The essence or ‘inner import’ of an empirical judgement, or one based in representation, is then to be expressed at a categorial level and this is the level at which speculative thought operates. The content or inner relations of necessity that develop in speculative thinking and are captured in speculative propositions are categorial. Accordingly the double direction of the speculative judgement will not hold at the level of a judgement such as ‘the rose is red’. This cannot equally be read as ‘the red is rose’ as ‘the rose’ here is the substance that supports the accident ‘red’. The reversal can only occur when the form of such a judgement is dissolved or passed through (in the collapse of subject and predicate into one another), but then we no longer stand at the level in which subject and predicate are related externally as fixed subject and accidental property.

Third, this dissolution of the general form of judgement transforms the previous process of predication from one in which the essential content was given and taken to act as a standard for deciding the truth of that predicated of it, to a process in which, that which is predicated is constitutive of the essential content of the subject. That is to say, that content which was previously taken as given in the process of predication is now produced by it. By ridding the proof of any reliance on presupposition, it transforms the previous methods of proof into a fluid development in which what is true and what is produced or constituted in the development are interchangeable<sup>149</sup>. Predicate and subject have here collapsed into one another, and

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<sup>149</sup> In this light it should be clear that Hegel’s claim that philosophical thought can and does go beyond the general form of judgement is essentially a claim to the effect that genuine philosophical thought

there is no longer a relation of dependence between them, instead we find an equivalence.

Fourth, here we have the process of the subject determining itself, not a re-presentation of it – external and abstracted from it – but instead the actual determination as it occurs in that subject. In reference to Hegel’s conception of truth as material truth, mentioned earlier, we can see that here, insofar as the content of the subject is self-determining and not imposed on the subject externally, we have a materially true content, and the question, as far as proof is concerned, is no longer whether the coherence of determinations in a judgement matches a presupposed or given content, but whether the predication constitutes the complete determination of the subject – the totality of the judgement (LPGE p.257). To put it in the terms of Hegel’s discussion of the form of proof, it is as if we have the process the triangle followed in determining itself rather than the auxiliary lines that we draw in an attempting a demonstration of it. Here, then, there is no separation to be made between form and content, we cannot abstract the former from the latter. The content that develops is always that of the one subject and the subject is that content. In this sense a formalisation of this process would lose or abstract from its essential character.

Now, Hegel faces a Gordian knot of sorts in aiming to demonstrate the development of this content, as he observes:

“(T)he sublation of the form of the proposition must not happen only in an *immediate* manner, through the mere content of the proposition. On the contrary, this opposite movement must find explicit expression ... this return of the Notion into itself must be *set forth*. This movement which constitutes what formerly the proof was supposed to accomplish, is the dialectical movement of the proposition itself. This alone is the speculative *in act*, and only the expression of this movement is a speculative exposition ... The *proposition* should express *what* the True is; but essentially the True is Subject. As such it is merely the dialectical movement, this course that generates itself, going forth from, and returning to, itself. In non-speculative cognition proof constitutes this side of expressed

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realises intellectual intuition as a species of conception. Here the distinction between knowing and creating disappears – the process of self-knowledge of the subject is a process of self-constitution. This is not, for Hegel, some privileged form of mental experience, but it is open to any rational individual with discursive capacities.



inwardness. But once the dialectic has been separated from proof, the notion of philosophical demonstration has been lost.

Here we should bear in mind that the dialectical movement likewise has propositions for its parts or elements; the difficulty just indicated seems, therefore, to recur perpetually, and to be inherent in the very nature of philosophical exposition. This is like what happens in ordinary proof, where the reasons given are themselves in need of further reasons, and so on *ad infinitum*. This pattern of giving reasons and stating conditions belongs to that method of proof which differs from the dialectical movement, and belongs therefore to external cognition. As regards the dialectical movement itself, its element is the one Notion; it thus has a content which is, in its own self, Subject through and through. Thus no content occurs which functions as an underlying subject, nor receives its meaning as a predicate; the proposition as it stands is merely an empty form.” (PS 65/66, pp.39-40)

A presentation of the development of the content which constitutes philosophical truth will involve the use predicative language. Indeed, although the propositional form, that relates a fixed predicate to a pre-determined given subject, is deemed an ‘empty form’ due to its incapacity to display or contain true philosophical content, it is nevertheless this form that must be passed through or sublated in order to apprehend the true content (the sublation of this form being part of that content). Such a form cannot simply be done away with, but must come to be understood differently:

“the habit of expressing the speculative predicate in the form of a proposition, and not as Notion and essence, creates a difficulty that can be increased or diminished through the very way in which philosophy is expounded. In keeping with our insight into the nature of speculation, the exposition should preserve the dialectical form, and should admit nothing except in so far as it is comprehended [in terms of the Notion], and is the Notion.” (PS 66, p.41)

A new type of philosophical exposition is required to display the content, one which teaches the reader to treat subject/predicate sentences speculatively, that is, not to treat the predicate and subject as related according to the usual propositional form, but instead to treat them as ‘essence’ and ‘Notion’ respectively, in a dialectical process.

In summary, we can see that philosophical proof cannot, for Hegel, consist in a straightforward affirmative movement from a pre-determined, isolated individual as

starting point, to some other thing as if it were equally a self-standing individual. This is the error of all other forms of proof. Rather, philosophical proof depends on grasping the identity of the initial, purely approximate, subject determination and its further determination in the predicate through a suspension of presuppositions. As we have seen, the movement is then one from an initial subject to an increasingly detailed, concrete determination *of that same subject*. Hence, proof as a demonstration of this identity, must bring forth the identity in the initial straightforward affirmative movement. It must display the affirmative movement in which the subject is treated as given, as a dialectical movement in which the logical determination of the subject turns into that of the predicate. In other words, a function of such a proof is to teach us to read speculative propositions and the dialectical movement involved in them (PS 61 & 65, pp.38/39) in judgment. It is such movement itself which, for Hegel, “constitutes what formerly the proof was supposed to accomplish” and which “alone is the speculative *in act*” (PS 65, p.39).

As far as the traditional proofs of the existence of God are concerned then, we can see that their error consists in being straightforward affirmative movements from presupposed starting points, and therefore they show only an external coherence of their terms. While the ontological proof attempted to show internal coherence, it too fundamentally relied upon presupposition.

The success of Hegel's own re-working of proof through the revision of judgement then, can be seen to rest on the suspension of the presupposition of any standard for the truth of judgement. This does not mean that we must *reject* any such presupposition from the outset, but that we should suspend or withhold assent to any such given presupposition. It is only in doing so that we can adopt a meta-level role of impartial phenomenological observers, watching to see what occurs in to a given presupposition in the experience of a form of consciousness. As Hegel urges: “we do not need to import criteria, or to make use of our own bright ideas and thoughts during the course of the inquiry; it is precisely when we leave these aside that we succeed in contemplating the matter at hand as it is *in and for itself*” (PS 84, p.54).

Whether or not it is possible to withhold any such assent in this manner is a question for every individual reader of Hegel, though I confess, I do not see that it is impossible to do so. Either way, it is an earnest request to attempt to do so, and one that should be taken seriously in reading Hegel. In withholding in this manner, the only questions for the success of Hegel's presentation centre on whether the reader is

in accord with the presentation: 'does such withholding leave one initially with pure, indeterminate immediacy?', 'does one's experience of this immediacy match the description of sense-certainty?', etc., and such questions should be asked at every stage of following Hegel through his system. If no discord is found, then Hegel's presentation will be successful.

#### 4. Expectations Fulfilled?

From the implications outlined above and our general account in this chapter, we can derive a number of expectations which Hegel's putative demonstration of the two ways admissible for the unity of thought and being in the *Phenomenology* is to meet. We will recall that the strategy in this chapter has been to consider Hegel's assessment of, and reaction to, the Kantian critique of the proofs of God's existence, in order to derive such expectations, and we have seen in the process that Hegel's primary concern with this critique (and indeed, philosophical positions that act as forerunners to it) is its failure to sufficiently investigate its grounds. The Kantian critique, for Hegel, attacks the 'elevation of thinking' that leads consciousness from the 'empirical' to the 'transcendental path' (and by which it affirms the proofs of God's existence). The empirical path is taken to ultimately rest on the transcendental one, that is, the physico-theological proof rests on the cosmological proof, which in turn rests on the ontological proof. The attack itself is made on the basis of the principles of the Understanding, which themselves are derived from an insufficiently critical acceptance of the general form of judgement. How such an insufficiently critical acceptance affects the possibility of providing a philosophical proof or demonstration, and the kind of distortion incurred by positions guilty of such acceptance, was explicated through Hegel's own discussion of proof and of the relation of metaphysics, empiricism, and Critical philosophy. We saw that the conditions involved in such acceptance and responsible for the distortion, along with the failure to see a way to providing a proof, viz. the fixity and affirmative nature of the subject as standard, lead to a collapse in the usual subject/predicate relation and to a revision of that relation.

Given the details of the general account in this chapter then, we might reasonably expect Hegel's putative demonstration to meet the following expectations<sup>150</sup>.

First, given the earlier supposition of a correspondence between Kant's two paths (the empirical and the transcendental) and Hegel's two ways, we would expect (as mentioned earlier) that a presentation of admissibility of the two methods in the *Phenomenology* would begin from the empirical path. It is on this path that the starting points of the physico-theological proof: "the experience of the things of the present world, and the constitution and order of these" (CPR A620/B648), and that of the cosmological proof: "experience which is purely indeterminate ... experience of existence in general" could be located.

Second, given Hegel's view of judgement as involving a process of separation or division – as an *Ur-teilung* – that leads to its revision, which reveals judgement as productive of the inner content of things, i.e. of their true being, we would expect the presentation of the *Phenomenology* to display a method which involves the kind of separation found in judgement.

This must be presented in such a way that, we as readers, can be made aware of the distortion inherent in an insufficiently critical acceptance of the general form of judgement. In the previous discussion of the general form of judgement this was achieved through the collapse of that form. A standard for the subject that was presumed to be external to thought, was shown to be dependent on a distorted view of a fundamental separation between thought and being, which itself stemmed from an insufficiently critical acceptance of the form of judgement as the form of truth. Even the Kantian, who grasped that the standard for the subject is constituted in thought, maintained this separation of thought and being, taking any such standard as merely subjective.

So, this second expectation is really two expectations: first, we would expect to see the same kind of difficulties that the acceptance of the form of judgement as the form of truth engenders in metaphysics and empiricism, that Critical philosophy fails to overcome, and that leads to the speculative revision of judgement, and second, we would expect that revision to come through a collapse in the usual subject/predicate

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<sup>150</sup> Naturally, what follows is not a definitive list giving expectations that any putative demonstration of the admissibility of methods for the unity of thought and being would have to meet in order to be successful. As stated in the introduction, I am not concerned with the success or failure of Hegel's project, but rather with a certain way in which his thought concerning scepticism and Critical philosophy may help us to understand the opening transitions of the *Phenomenology*.

relationship. That is, we would expect to witness a collapse of the fixity and affirmative nature of the subject as standard for the truth of judgement.

Third, we would then expect this acceptance of the form of judgement as the form of truth to be involved in the starting point of the empirical path. But this starting point is not to serve as the ground of Hegel's proof – it is not to be taken as an affirmative starting point. If it is taken as such, then the result, viz. the unity of thought and being, would be taken to depend upon this false or distorted view of judgement. This is something that we saw Hegel explicitly warn against earlier, in his discussion of proof<sup>151</sup>. Rather, the starting point in the process of proof is negated, it is shown to be a nullity, and what appears to be the result is shown to be the ground<sup>152</sup>. It is this process that Hegel refers to in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* when he claims:

“The metaphysical proofs that God is there are deficient explanations and descriptions of the elevation of the spirit from world to God, because they do not express, or rather they do not bring out, the moment of *negation* that is contained in this elevation – for the very fact that the world is *contingent* implies that it is something *incidental*, phenomenal, in and for itself *null and void* ... It is only the *nullity* of the being of the world that is the bond of the elevation; so that what

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<sup>151</sup> “In this procedure of subjective necessity we start from certain initial definitions that are already familiar to us. There are assumptions or initial conditions, for example that the triangle or the right angle is given. Definite [logical] connections are presupposed, and we then show in proofs of this kind that if there is one determination then the other is, too. That is, we make the result dependent on given specifications already present. What we arrive at is represented as something dependent upon assumptions. In the application of this model [*Vorstellung*] of demonstration to the formulation [*Vorstellung*] of proofs of God's existence, what appears at once is the inappropriateness of wishing to exhibit a coherence of this kind in the case of God. This appears particularly in the first procedure, which we called the elevation of the finite to God, so that (if we embrace the process within the form of the proof) we have a relationship in which the finite is the foundation from which the being of God is demonstrated. In this [logical] nexus the being of God appears as a consequence, as dependent upon the being of the finite. This is the distortion, that this progression that we call “proving” is unsuited to what we represent to ourselves under [the name] “God” – for God is, of course, precisely the non-derivative, he is utterly actual being in and for itself” (LPR 417-419).

Hegel also reiterates the point at EL §50, p.96, by pointing out (in specific reference to Jacobi) that the manner in which the ‘elevation’ of thinking above the sensible i.e., the passage from the finite to infinite, conditioned to unconditioned, takes place, corrects the semblance that this elevation is grounded in the finite or conditioned.

<sup>152</sup> In the 1821 *Lectures On The Philosophy Of Religion*, Hegel describes, metaphorically, this feature of the usurping of the starting point as ground by that which seemed to result from it, by characterising the progression from the starting point to the result as being like “a stream flowing in opposite directions”. This bears comparison to Plato's characterisation of dialectic at *Republic* 511 b-c (see Plato 1993):

“When it takes things for granted, it doesn't treat them as starting-points, but as basic in the strict sense – as platforms and rungs, for example. These serve it until it reaches a point where nothing needs to be taken for granted, and which is the starting-point for everything. Once it has grasped this starting-point, it turns around and by a process of depending on the things which depend from the starting-point it descends to an end-point”.

In terms of judgement, this brings out the importance of the collapse of the fixity and affirmative nature of the subject-term, its status as hypothetical. It is this collapse which allows us to see that the fixity and affirmative nature of this term was simply being assumed.

does mediate vanishes, and in this mediation, the mediation is itself sublated”  
(EL §50, p.96).

So, insofar as we would expect the acceptance of the form of judgement as the form of truth to be involved in the starting point of the empirical path, we would expect that such acceptance will be shown not to be the true ground of the proof, and that this will involve the highlighting of the negating moment – the moment of the collapse of the usual subject/predicate relation in judgement.

It is this moment of collapse that provides the link between Hegel’s two ways. What was taken to be the starting point in the first way – being – appears, through the collapse, to be the abstraction of thinking. However, ‘we’ see that the movement from being to abstraction, the movement of the collapse, is productive of the essential content of actual being, that is, the movement of one way (being to abstraction of thinking) is shown, actually, to be the movement of the other (abstraction of thinking to being). It was claimed in the first chapter, that this connection of the ways is demonstrated through the transition of A. into B. Therefore, our fourth expectation would be to locate the moment of collapse in this transition<sup>153</sup>.

Insofar as the fulfilment of these expectations would indicate the collapse and revision of the general form of judgement we have previously discussed, then it would also involve the implications of that collapse and revision discerned there. So, are these expectations met in the transitions from A. to C.(AA.) outlined in the first chapter, and if so how?

A cursory look back to the details outlined in the first chapter should be sufficient to establish that these expectations are met and to show in what way they are met. We can take each expectation in turn.

First, it appears that the *Phenomenology*’s putative presentation does begin on the empirical path. In A. we begin with sense-experience, and more specifically, with immediate knowledge of the empirical. Throughout A. consciousness is concerned only with its experience of the empirical world, even in ‘Force & the Understanding’ where the supersensible world comes into view, it does so only as the inner truth of the empirical world. Consciousness is not yet here concerned with anything other than the

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<sup>153</sup> Given the connection between Hegel’s two ways, we can see that they are, at least structurally, linked to Kant’s two paths. For Kant, the proofs to be found on the empirical path – the physico-theological and cosmological proofs, while being taken to be independent from the transcendental path and its ontological proof, are in fact shown to be dependent on the ontological proof. Obviously, for Hegel, there is a somewhat similar relation.

empirical world, its presence, order and constitution, and furthermore the inner truth of this world, its being as a whole or in general, turns out for consciousness to be purely indeterminate. By B., insofar as ‘we’ have, in principle, grasped the Absolute Notion, ‘we’ start from the ideal of Reason, though not as a mere ideal or as an abstraction of thinking, but as actual, and insofar as consciousness has not grasped this, but instead is faced with an indeterminate, unknowable beyond, opposed to itself, the ideal appears as a mere ideal or abstraction of thinking.

Second, it seems that the presentation in the *Phenomenology* involves the same kind of difficulties involved in metaphysics and empiricism that Critical philosophy fails to sufficiently overcome, which lead to a collapse of the fixity and affirmative nature of the subject in judgement as the standard of truth. If we recall the dialectic of Sense-certainty and Perception we will see that the difficulties encountered there are of the same nature as those involved in metaphysics and empiricism. The difficulties stem from the conviction that there is a perfect fit between cognition and truth, that the latter is given directly or immediately in the former, or put another way, that both the form and content of truth match the form and content of cognition.

In Sense-certainty we begin with a form of consciousness that straightforwardly accepts immediate determinations as given, to be true. That is, like metaphysics, Sense-certainty involves the belief or conviction that truth is simply cognised and Hegel confirms as much when he says in his discussion of metaphysics that “All philosophy in its beginnings, all of the sciences, even the daily doing and dealing of consciousness, lives in this belief” (EL §26, p.65). Now, in Sense-certainty this cognising is like its object, immediate: “here neither I nor the thing has the significance of a complex process of mediation; the ‘I’ does not have the significance of a manifold imagining or thinking; nor does the ‘thing’ signify something that has a host of qualities” (PS 91, p.58). There is simply “an *immediate* pure connection” (Ibid.) between subject and object. At least, that is how Sense-certainty is meant to be, but when we look at an actual instance of it we find that the object given represents the truth and the cognising or knowing an unessential element. The cognising is mediate, it comes only through the object, which is the truth. Here we see straightaway the division involved in judgement: in judgement one element, the subject, represents the concrete content and truth, whereas another element, that which is predicated of the subject, that which putatively informs of the subject, is an accident of the subject, unessential to it. Correspondingly, in Sense-certainty the object is the truth and the

subject, 'I', is unessential. But then the object seems not to be what Sense-certainty proclaims it to be, the sheer being of the thing, the immediate essence or the 'This', seems instead to be a universal which abides irrespective of its varied and fluctuating content. That is, just as the subject in judgement, in its separation from the content described by the predicate applied to it, is something over against this content – that in which the content inheres, or its essence – so too the object of Sense-certainty is something over against the immediate content it is taken to be by consciousness. As we saw, consciousness as Sense-certainty tries various strategies to hold onto its object as a unique, immediate essence, but ultimately comes to accept it as the universal, and in doing so becomes Perception.

As Perception the universal is apprehended by consciousness as a number of properties belonging to the thing. In merely apprehending there is no strict opposition between cognition and truth here. Perception, at its outset, simply cognises the truth. This truth though seems to involve conflicting elements, it is at once an abstract universal medium of indifferent properties – an Also, and an exclusive One. Perception, as it initially apprehends its object, apprehends it “purely as a *One*” (PS 117, p.70), but it also perceives in the object “a property which is *universal*, and which thereby transcends the singularity [of the object]” (Ibid.), and accordingly accepts the object as a community, as an Also. But the properties which provide the object with determination must be exclusive or independent in order to do so, and so the object as an Also, as the abstract medium of those properties, cannot be indifferent but must be, in truth, exclusive like the properties, i.e. a One. It is at once an abstract medium and an exclusive unity. These conflicting characterisations of the object capture just the kind of conflict that we saw develop in empiricism as it attempted to provide a concrete content by restricting the truth to what is sensuously present in perception. There, we saw that in the analysis of the object empiricism separates out the determinate, concrete properties of the object, rendering them abstract universals and thus loses the object as a concrete unity – rendering the unity an abstract universal like the properties. Again, in this conflict, we saw simply what was involved in the general form judgement. In judgement while the predicate is something separated and independent from the subject which is its ground or essence, and thus is something secondary or unessential, it is the predicate which characterises or determines the subject, and we identify the subject with the predicate applied to it.



In Perception, we also see that the conflicting characterisations give rise to a questioning of or doubt regarding the conviction from which they stem. In attempting to resolve the conflict of these characterisations Perception resorts to the expedient of taking responsibility for whichever characterisation is deceptive, which is to say it begins to relinquish the conviction that it merely cognises the truth and begins to grasp that it actively takes things to be a certain way. It only begins to do so however, at this point, because the standard for truth is still sensuous and external. All it needs to do now, to reach the truth, is to remove whatever it contributes to the appearance of the truth through its taking. Naturally, this proves to be easier said than done.

We see consciousness develop on from here into 'Force & the Understanding' in which the truth of the object of Sense-certainty and Perception is grasped not as sensuous but notional, as a supersensible realm of laws. In other words, we see the elevation of the sensuous content, "the content that belongs to perception, feeling and intuition into the *form of universal notions, principles, and laws* etc." (EL §38, p.77) that occurs in empiricism. Similarly to empiricism, "these universal determinations (for instance "force") are not supposed to have any more significance and validity on their own account than that which is taken from perception, and no justification save the connection that can be demonstrated in experience" (Ibid.). Rather, they are at once "beyond the perceived world" and "equally *present* in it ... its direct tranquil image" (PS 149, pp.90-1). We watch more difficulties develop for consciousness as the perceived world retains for itself an aspect independent of the notions. Again these difficulties mirror those found in the development of empiricism into a kind of modern, Humean scepticism, where it is realised that the determinations of universality and necessity lack justification on the basis of perception. Though these determinations are arrived at through the analysis of the perceived world and putatively represent its truth, they seem indifferent to their actual expression in the perceived world, it seems that such determinations are not found present in the perceived world. As a result the inner world and perceived world seem separate from and opposed to one another. Here once more we see the separation involved in the general form of judgement. The subject as the concrete content, even though it is characterised by the predicate through its identification with it, is diverse from this predicate, which is abstract and not the entirety of the subject's content.

Now, these difficulties lead consciousness to accept responsibility for the opposition of these elements. The truth itself is taken to lie beyond this opposition, and

is unknowable. In terms of the general form of judgement then the subject here can no longer represent a standard of truth, and therefore a predicate applied to it cannot characterise an aspect of the truth, rather the truth in its actual content lies beyond the general form judgement in an object fundamentally diverse from it, and judgement is taken to be purely formal. In accepting responsibility for the opposition of the elements, consciousness accepts responsibility for making distinctions which are not real distinctions but purely formal ones, and as such the truth is not to be found in such distinctions but beyond them, over against them. However, as Hegel points out, this distinguishing of the true content as standard over against the merely formal one of consciousness, is itself just a distinction of consciousness, i.e. a formal distinction that is not real. Consequently, this distinction is collapsed and consciousness's previous truth – the supersensible world – is inverted, collapsing into its opposite – the sensuous world.

In witnessing this inversion or collapse we were to learn that the error of consciousness throughout its foregoing difficulties was that of 'fixing the differences in a different sustaining element', i.e. of placing the truth over here (whether as the sheer being of Sense-certainty, the concrete thing of Perception or the supersensible world of the Understanding) and that which seems different from it (the constant passing of the mere being into non-being, the contradictory appearance of the thing, and the absolute flux or movement of the sensuous world of appearance) over there, in a different sustaining element, as independent and opposed to the truth. What was not questioned by consciousness in this fixing was the content of what was taken to constitute the truth in the first place. Rather consciousness was simply certain of this content as truth and attempted to hold fast to it, so that whatever contradicted the content in experience must be diverse from it. We have seen that this feature is inherent in the general form of judgement.

Of course, in grasping the error of consciousness and watching its progression through various different forms in A. we have seen that by holding fast to the presupposed content, by taking the subject in judgement to accurately represent the standard of truth, consciousness is, in effect, testing the adequacy of this content against its experience, and the content is altered to match the experience<sup>154</sup>. However, in consistently attempting to hold fast to the content, fixing any differences from the

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<sup>154</sup> In this respect we saw the essential content pass from immediacy to abstract universality, to internally differentiated universality etc.

content which arise in experience in a different sustaining element, consciousness as Understanding finds itself left with the truth as a content it cannot know in its determination. That is, in holding to the general form of judgement as the form of truth, consciousness finds itself faced with the truth as an unknowable content through its own experience. It has, so to speak, dissolved the content of its previous truths.

Now, insofar as our second expectation is met it is clear that from the outset of A. consciousness involves the acceptance, or we might say certainty, that the general form of judgement is the form of truth. However, as the third expectation makes clear, this cannot act as an affirmative starting point, instead it is to be negated and what results from it is to be shown to be the ground or the truth of the certainty. This seems to occur in the transition from A. to B.

In this transition we have seen that with the determination of the truth as an independent, unknowable substrate, consciousness brings about the collapse of its standard of truth, that is, it brings about the collapse of the subject in judgement as the standard of truth. The subject in judgement was assumed to accurately capture or represent the external object which stood as the truth. With the determination of this object as an unknowable beyond this assumption is thrown into question, it seems that far from accurately representing this object the determinate content of the subject itself is constituted by the Understanding. That is to say, the certainty that the general form of judgement is the form of truth is negated. However, as we have seen this is just as much the negation of the determination of the truth as an unknowable substrate because this determination is made on the basis that certainty – the subject accurately represents the object. The truth is neither a content independent from consciousness nor is it an unknowable content, and its determination as such is an abstraction of thinking based on an uncritical acceptance of the general form of judgement as the form of truth.

The result of this negation is self-consciousness as the truth or essence of consciousness, and this is a new starting point. Naturally, this starting point, this self-consciousness, is at first completely abstract. After all, this truth at this stage is simply neither a content independent from consciousness nor unknowable, and its content is yet to be seen in its development. The development of its content, as we saw in the discussion of B., is given through its opposition to consciousness. This new truth, self-consciousness, as the negation of the previous truth, consciousness, *results from* that previous truth and so that truth is required for the demonstration of this new one.

Hence Hegel's description of immediate self-consciousness as containing consciousness as a distinct moment within itself, or his description of it as *Desire*. As we saw, insofar as consciousness is contained in self-consciousness it can be said that self-consciousness *produces* the object of its desire, the truth to be negated, by which self-consciousness is self-consciousness. It is through this process of production and negation that we come to see what self-consciousness involves or consists in, and come to see that the object produced, far from being indistinguishable from or completely reducible to this self-consciousness, is rather independent from it, another independent self-consciousness.

So, both the third and also the fourth expectation we had are met: the moment of the collapse of the previous truth comes in the transition from A. to B., and this collapse provides the connection between the movement from being to the abstraction of thinking and from the abstraction back to being. The connection between the movements is given in the fact that the first movement is an essential feature of the second, that through which the second movement is made.

It seems then that the expectations derived from our account in this chapter, that the presentation of the opening transitions of the *Phenomenology* was to meet if our general hypothesis was to be confirmed, are in fact met in that presentation. That is, our general hypothesis appears to be confirmed.

## **Conclusion**

Now that we have seen that the expectations derived in chapter three are met by Hegel's presentation in the opening transitions of the *Phenomenology* it remains for me to, first, briefly review what I take to be the results of the foregoing, and second, say a few words concerning the implications of this for the way in which I view the relation of the *Phenomenology* to the *Logic* and Hegel's idealism in general.

I have tried to show in the foregoing that the hypothesis that the opening transitions of the *Phenomenology* involves an, in principle, demonstration of the admissibility of two ways for the unification of being and thought is neither without merit as an interpretive hypothesis, nor lacking textual support. Support has been found straightforwardly in our reading of these opening transitions and through the connections displayed in the reading with other texts, whereas its merit derives from the interconnectedness of the texts insofar as they are in agreement on the general matter of what is required for a genuine philosophical proof, and what constitutes the error of previous forms of philosophy such as metaphysics, empiricism and Critical philosophy.

This error was identified as an insufficiently questioned acceptance of or insufficiently critical reliance on the general form of judgement as the form of truth. The problem here was not so much with any contention that judgement is able to reach truth, as with a perceived failure to appropriately investigate the nature and functioning of judgement in relation to truth. As we saw, Hegel questions the traditional construal of judgement, reconceiving it as a process which far from relying on an external content for its standard, or the subjective content found in Critical philosophy, actively produces its own content in a process of self-determination. This reconceived process fulfilled Hegel's criteria for a genuine philosophical proof. That is, it consisted in the presentation of the intrinsic coherence or internal necessary connections of determinations of content with one another. It shows the internal determination of the matter itself to be proved and not simply our subjective representation of that determination, and begins from a starting point emptied of assumed, pre-determined content which was to be held fixed as a standard of truth. It is the internal self-generative process of a single, absolute subject.

We saw that much of the motivation for this analysis and reconception of judgement stems from Hegel's early work on scepticism and its influence on his reading of Critical philosophy as well as metaphysics and empiricism. Of course, the reconceived process of judgement is itself implicit in the movement through the various forms of consciousness presented in the *Phenomenology*, and as the essence of both thought and being this self-generative process is that in which the distinction of thought and being is dissolved. In arguing that the opening sections of the *Phenomenology* trace a path from being to the abstraction of thinking and from this point back again, in which the opposition of being and thought, in principle, can be seen to have been dissolved, I have of course been suggesting that the *Phenomenology* provides a demonstration of this implicit self-generative process and a means by which it can be comprehended.

Though I have not given space to a detailed discussion of the relation of Hegel's *Phenomenology* to the *Encyclopaedia Logic* and, indeed, the rest of his system, it should be plain that I see the *Phenomenology* as representing an introduction to that system insofar as it is to show that the certainties and convictions of the consciousness observed there actually lead it to the realisation that being is not something objective standing over against thought, but rather that the two are essentially the same self-generative process. As Hegel notes:

“the individual has the right to demand that Science should at least provide him with a ladder to this standpoint, should show him this standpoint within himself. His right is based on his absolute independence, which he is conscious of possessing in every phase of his knowledge; for in each one, whether recognised by Science or not, and whatever the content may be, the individual is the absolute form, i.e. he is the immediate certainty of himself and, if this expression be preferred, he is therefore unconditioned being. The standpoint of consciousness which knows objects in their antithesis to itself, and itself in antithesis to them, is for Science the antithesis of its own standpoint” (PS 26, pp.14-15)

The *Phenomenology* is just such a ladder by which natural consciousness up-ends itself, attaining the standpoint of Science in which thought and being are understood to be essentially the same. In its introductory capacity, then, the *Phenomenology* does not provide us with a presentation of the self-generating essence in its pure

determinations; this is the task of the *Logic*. Rather we see this essence implicit in various forms of consciousness and come to the realisation (as does the consciousness observed) that being is not to be regarded as the distinct, fundamentally separate object of consciousness, opposed to thought, but that both thought and being are, in essence, the same.

As such a ladder for natural consciousness, the *Phenomenology* may be viewed as not being the sole possible path to the *Logic*<sup>155</sup>. One example of another path may be a review of the history of modern philosophy like that of metaphysic, empiricism, and Critical philosophy etc. found at the beginning of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*<sup>156</sup>, which may convince one to suspend or abandon the presuppositions one holds regarding the relation of thought to being. This is a plausible suggestion and we have seen that much of the content of Hegel's review is also involved in the presentation of the *Phenomenology*. However, I do not think that this should be taken as a suggestion that the presentation in the *Phenomenology* is essentially redundant or replaceable by some other presentation. The comments regarding the various philosophical positions made in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* are direct and concise, and certainly may appear disagreeable to the founders and followers of the positions concerned. While they may constitute a path of sorts to the *Logic* they do not constitute a demonstration that such positions immanently lead to the speculative standpoint, rather they seem to highlight common shortcomings dissolved in such a standpoint. As such, they are, perhaps, intended to be supplemental to the kind of path traced in the *Phenomenology*, a reminder of the unwarranted claims or presuppositions of modern philosophy.

Now, if the *Phenomenology* is at least, in part, to fulfil the task I have imputed to it, then a question arises concerning the relation of the opening transitions to the rest of the more overtly historical dialectic in the *Phenomenology*. In light of the putative demonstrations of A. and B. and evidence which suggests that Hegel himself had doubts concerning the coherence of this earlier material with the rest of the *Phenomenology*<sup>157</sup>, should this earlier material be treated as the rational core of the

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<sup>155</sup> For instance, see S. Houlgate 2006, pp.144-8 and also pp.67-71.

<sup>156</sup> This is one of the suggestions Houlgate makes. Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> For example, as R. Pippin (1993) notes, the fact that Hegel's own summary of the *Phenomenology* for his students at Nürnberg only included material up to the chapter on Reason, i.e. C.(AA.), has been taken by some interpreters as evidence that Hegel preferred a direct transition from this point to the *Logic*. Pippin also noted that Otto Pöggeler hypothesizes that in actually writing that chapter of the *Phenomenology* Hegel realised that he had effectively fulfilled his task of providing a science of the

work, separable in some way from the whole? This is a question which cannot be answered solely on the basis of the research undertaken here. While my research does suggest a spilt of sorts, a close consideration of the rest of the material of the *Phenomenology* from C.(AA.) onwards would be required before we could affirm or deny this, and the issue of the precise relation of the presentations of A. and B. as I envisage them, to the rest of the *Phenomenology* must be left for another time.

Similarly, the wider issue of the general nature of Hegel's idealism, of how we are to classify it as a philosophical position, is a topic for another occasion, though there is at least one observation concerning this issue in the foregoing worth bringing out here.

There is nothing in what has been said to suggest that Hegel simply follows Kant in his critical turn and that we should construe Hegel's claims regarding the collapse of the distinction between thought and being in an anti-realist fashion. That is to say, there is nothing to suggest that such a collapse ought to be thought of in terms of the claim "that a Notionally conditional actuality is all that being could intelligibly be"<sup>158</sup>, instead of more straightforwardly in terms of a claim that being as it *is*, is no longer distinguishable from what we conceive it to be. We have seen Hegel's criticism of pre-Kantian metaphysics and the role his reading of scepticism has in this, but we have also seen that, while he views Kant's position as a great advance on this metaphysics and takes up the imperative to submit all unwarranted principles and fundamental assumptions to investigation, in part, from the Critical philosophy, he also charges this philosophy with committing essentially the same error as pre-Critical metaphysics. Taking his comments at face value then, it seems that the correction of this error allows us to see the Absolute itself in its self-determination.

If the role sketched for the *Phenomenology* is correct, then any sceptical worries concerning our view of the fundamental nature of reality seem to be dealt with as we progress: in viewing each form of consciousness, grounds for doubting that form's conception of reality are articulated from within that form and not just *abstractly* raised, and these grounds are shown to be based on unquestioned presuppositions. The progression through the forms is shown to lead to a point at which no more doubts are encountered. If the sceptic then wishes to raise a doubt after this point (s)he would have to actually provide new grounds not encompassed by the

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experience of consciousness.

<sup>158</sup> Pippin 1989, p.98.



progression in the *Phenomenology*, and failure to do so would render the doubt incoherent or idle. Again, there is nothing in what has been said to suggest that this relatively straightforward demonstration need be construed as a demonstration that any sceptical worries that attempt to exploit a division between thought and being are incoherent or senseless, because 'a Notionally conditional actuality is all that being could intelligibly be', rather than because they have been seen to be based on unquestioned presuppositions and we are now in a position to see reality itself in its actual self-generative process.

Of course, I have not directly engaged with such a view in the foregoing and it cannot be ruled out without much further detailed investigation of the *Phenomenology* and Hegel's system generally, but there seems to be little in what we have seen to suggest that this kind non-metaphysical view need be adopted, that we cannot simply accept Hegel's statements concerning the self-generative essence as the fundamental nature of reality at face value.

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